THE GOLDEN AGE

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REV. A. A. BEDIKIAN

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THE GOLDEN AGE
IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

An Introduction to
ARMENIAN LITERATURE
IN PERSPECTIVE

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by

A. A. BEDIKIAN

ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, Inc.
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BENEFACTORS' STATEMENT

This book sounds a call with an enthusiastic invitation to learn of the glorious fifth century during which the Armenian people experienced a quantum cultural leap manifest in significant advancements in architectural church design, music, trade, medicine, and religious and theological understanding. According to the Reverend Bedikian, the creation of the Armenian alphabet very early in the fifth century was the single most outstanding achievement changing the Armenian way of life and completely revitalizing the national spirit throughout the many widespread communities from Cilicia to the Caucasus. His account of the fifth century, a book of just over one hundred pages, raises a special kind of excitement when one realizes that while the Armenians were clearly enjoying a renaissance in that century dealing with freedom of thought and conscience, Christianity, literature, music, and architecture, Western Europe (present-day Spain, France, Germany, and Britain) was inhabited by roving tribes.

In the early sixties, when this book was first published, ethnic identity in this country was popular and the American Armenians were busy sponsoring chairs at universities and establishing graduate studies in Armenian history and language. Little wonder, then, that this book responded to a need especially to those of the existing and emerging younger generation American Armenians many of whom were scarcely aware of their heritage.

Today, many younger Armenians are more curious and concerned than ever about their background and tradition. The reprinting of *The Golden Age of the Fifth Century* meets this response in many ways because it is brief, swift in pace, exciting and informative. Not only does it reinforce one's pride, but somehow stimulates interest for further enlightenment and generates a desire for scholarly involvment.

Although this project was jointly conceived, the republication was made possible because of the guidance and the generosity of time willingly given by Dr. G.H. Chopourian and the AMAA.

We consider it a privilege to sponsor this second printing.

Livingston, New Jersey
1976

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Board of Directors of the Armenian Missionary Association of America gratefully acknowledge the benevolence of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Moranian in furnishing the total cost of the paperback production of Rev. A.A. Bedikian's *The Golden Age in the Fifth Century.*

ARCHIE CHERKEZIAN

President, Armenian Missionary Association of America

December, 1976

PUBLISHER'S WORD

BY THE PUBLICATION of Rev. A. A. Bedikian's treatise on the Golden Age of Armenian History, the Armenian Missionary Association of America wishes to bring an "offering" in the nation-wide homage to the greatest event in our people's history: the invention of the Armenian alphabet and the translation of the Bible into Armenian.

It would be superfluous to try to introduce Rev. Bedikian to our readers. As preacher and speaker, as pastor and administrator, as writer and editor his name has woven its magic into the hearts and minds of all.

It is significant that, having used so long and so well the Armenian language as a loved and sacredly cherished channel of communication, he should now join forces with the pioneers of foresight who have recognized that the new generation of Armenian-Americans is eager to learn and to be proud of its spiritual, cultural, and historical heritage, but that this heritage must of necessity be presented to him in a medium he can easily and fully comprehend. As the author points out, such a one is a truer "Armenian" than one who may use the language yet by deed and attitude may be denying what is truly—spiritually and culturally—Armenian.

Rev. Bedikian's approach to history and his style are his own—and they are mighty good! This is no prosaic writing, no mere recording of facts and details. This historian has set himself the task of *presenting* history and of *interpreting* the grand drama and the dramatis personae of the Golden Age of Armenian history.

The reader will find the reading a pleasure, and he will gain new insights and a deep appreciation of what, in the providence of God, took place on Armenian soil sixteen hundred years ago. These insights, and such an appreciation, cannot but help us become better Armenians—better men and women in this great new land of ours.

We would like to express our special thanks to Dr. Vahe Roubian who has graciously carried on the responsibility of the details attached to the printing of the book and its distribution.

DICRAN Y. KASSOUNY, M.D.
Chairman, Publication Committee
of the A. M. A. A.

PREFACE

It is my purpose to introduce, within the compass of this little volume, the highlights of Armenian Literature that flourished in the classical period of the fifth century of our era, known as the "Golden Age."

I hope I will stimulate interest in the English-speaking generation of Armenians in their cultural background as reflected so brilliantly in the Golden Age of Armenian Literature.

All the chapters in this book originally appeared serially in the English edition of "Hoosharar," published monthly by the Armenian General Benevolent Union of America, Inc.

The very first chapter is meant to be an introduction; therefore, there is no excuse for an elaborate preface.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Nan Shilling for reading carefully and critically the text of this book before it went to the printer, and for her valuable editorial suggestions.

A. A. B.

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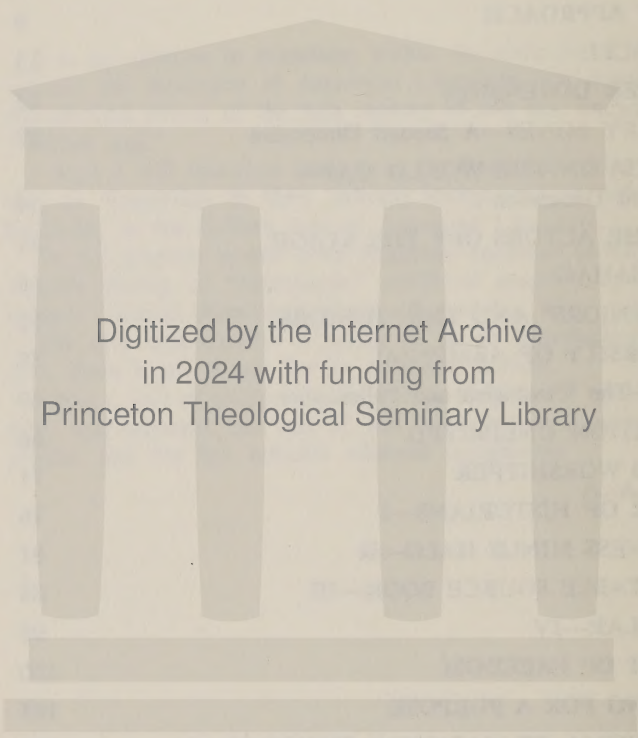
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A NEW APPROACH

THERE IS wide-spread ignorance of Armenian history and literature among the so-called "new generation" of American-born Armenians. We shall not enter into the why and wherefore of that fact. The fact is charitably granted by their elders; and it is humbly accepted by them. But in all my contacts with our youth through at least the last two decades I have found that their ignorance is not due to any lack of interest in the subject. I have proven to my own satisfaction that they are eager to learn about their past history and culture in all its varied colorings. Whenever I have had opportunities to talk to large or small groups of Armenian youth on Armenian history or literature or language, their interest in the information imparted to them has been invariably enthusiastic. The confessed ignorance of our youth of the general culture of their ancestry is not their fault. They will not be ignorant if somebody will teach them. They would be just as ignorant of American history and literature if they were not taught these subjects. They are ignorant of their Armenian historic and cultural background because nobody taught them.

Now, then, the question is: Who will teach them, and how?

I have struggled with this question for years. I have lectured and taught for many years under academic and community auspices but, alas, with very little accountable success. Why? Because I followed the conventional method of teaching. And to the best of my knowledge wherever Armenian is being taught today in community schools or in colleges and universities, the same dry-rot method is doggedly adhered to. Language is taught as a wearisome task of memorizing sounds, words and rules of grammar. Wrong! Language must be taught as music is taught to a pupil who has the dream of operatic singers in the background of his mind. History is not a string of events and dates to be recited, but a record of a continuous stream of national experiences to be interpreted in terms of life. I have in my library several shelves of Armenian histories but not a single volume that reads like an epic, that puts the events in the background and the soul of the people reflected

in events in the foreground. And what is literature? To the conventional lecturer or writer it is just a man and his poetry, or his essays, or his novels. There is, however, more to literature than the biography of an author and his literary output. Literature is life and light; and unless one lives it and is illumined by it, it is no more than a dead letter on the pages of a book. Literature has to be experienced as well as read. It is like walking in a garden, overwhelmed by a sense of wonder. In a garden there is more than we perceive with the eye. There is no beauty in a flower unless that beauty is translated into an experience of God who can make beauty possible, as in a flower, so also in the soul of man.

The method of approach to any subject is the thing that we must grapple with. That is what I am trying to stress. What, then, should it be?

Oh, I wish I knew. I don't. I wish I were younger, to learn. That also, alas, is impossible for me. But I can at least stimulate some interest in the pursuit of a better method of approach to teaching our language, our history, and our literature. The method that is, and has been, generally practiced is barren and useless. That I know.

Among a score or more of plans for literary pursuits I have developed, one is an "Introduction to Armenian Literature" with a new approach to the subject. I have no pretensions. I humbly confess my inadequacy to do it as well or as completely as it should be done. What I will attempt in a few chapters on these pages will be only an illustration of a method of approach that, whatever its merits may be, cannot be dubbed as "conventional."

This matter gained urgency in my mind primarily because of the inquiry of an intelligent young Armenian about sources of information about Armenian history and literature in which his parents took great pride but about which, unfortunately, they knew very little. He wanted to have a list of books to satisfy his interest in the subjects he was eager to learn about. This was not the first inquiry I had received from Armenian youth residing in different parts of this country. I have supplied bibliographies of available books they could locate and read to a great number of inquirers. But every single inquiry increased the weight pressing upon my conscience because I realized more and more that what I was doing was only a half-way measure to satisfy their genuine interest. And the most recent inquiry by a young friend of mine was the shot fired to set me on a race to do something better than offering only a list of references for reading, and possibly boring them with such a procedure of self-education. By this method I do know that their

interest froze rather than enlivened. I believe in our youth, and I am willing to stake the survival of our cultural life in and through them for many years yet to come. I am an incurable optimist because the foundations of my faith are deep. I believe that our youth are entitled to the help they expect from some of us who are grounded in the knowledge of our culture. They must have that help from us and, beyond any doubt, they will prove that they deserve all the help they can receive and make intelligent use of it.

I want to share with my readers the letter I received from my young Armenian friend to whom I referred, because it is typical of the thinking of many of the younger generation of Armenians. It is a letter that, like a window, enables one to take a good look into the soul of our youth. I could not resist the appeal of that letter.

Here is the letter by my young friend whose name I must, for obvious reasons, withhold:

> . . . "At this point I would confess something of my past and present thinking and also try to explain why I asked for [he had done it previously speaking to me] the information I did. In my early youth I was ashamed of my nationality. I remember the street fights I had with kids so I could uphold the honor of my Armenian extraction when they hurled at me stupid remarks because of that fact. I have many scars to remind me of these scuffles. I have forgotten the physical scars but the mental scars remain. I was ashamed for being ashamed. As my thinking matured I began to realize that we had a wonderful past. Indeed, our past has been as wonderful as the past of this our beloved country in which I was born, because Armenians died for the same objectives for which Americans fought and died. The consciousness of such a past makes me proud. And, as an American-Armenian, I am doubly proud because it has been my great fortune to fall heir to the rich heritage of two nations.
>
> Oh, if I had the barest knowledge of my Armenian heritage I would have fought the kids on our street more fiercely. But I would have done even better: I would have enlightened them about our past, and about the ideals we have pursued, and I would have made them appreciate why I was proud of my ancestry as they were of theirs. That surely would have been better than nourishing secretly a sense of shame, or driven by that sense, the beating I gave these kids. . . .
>
> I am anxiously waiting for the appearance of the series of articles you spoke to me about [I had given him a hint about my intention of producing such a series] and I know that many young Armenians like me will benefit by them. . . .

I propose to present selected areas of Armenian literature in their proper perspective in time and place. Let me put it this way:

I will attempt, if I can, to dramatize certain sections of our literature, with authors and books in the role of actors on stage, using as a backdrop the contemporaneous literature of other nations, and in a common atmosphere of current thoughts and events. Authors don't just write; they write with a purpose and reflect the life around them at the time they write. Now, the student of literature must go beyond the author and his thought and grasp the meaning of the forces that shaped the thoughts and sentiments of the author. There is indeed drama in every book of lasting value that makes it and its author interesting. In a word, the task of the student of literature must be to try to make authors and books a vital part of the reader. The book must come to life and live with and in the reader. And when it does, it will become a thing of enduring pleasure and interest.

Now, this is what should be done with our literature if we hope to really interest our youth in it. The question is who will do it? I repeat: I would not elect myself to do it. I will only grope along the way I have tried to show by these introductory remarks.

A MIRACLE

WHAT IS a miracle?

However you may define it, it will ultimately amount to saying that a miracle is a phenomenon that challenges human understanding and reasoning, and miracles occur in the spiritual world just as in the natural world.

Take, for instance, the history of the Armenian people extending, as a whole, over a period of more than twenty centuries. What is the most impressive and enduring fact it reveals? Simply this: That whatever the known or unknown reason, Armenians have as a nation survived through two thousand years. Now, I call that a miracle. Ask Arnold Toynbee to explain how that miracle occurred, and he will fail in his attempt—if indeed he attempts it—to explain it. He has indeed analyzed expertly the reasons why nations have risen and fallen but by-passed the miracle of the survival of the Armenian people. Why? Because it is impossible even for a historical philosopher such as Toynbee to explain a "miracle" of that nature. Why and how has the tiniest in the family of civilized nations of the world survived when the mightiest of nations have gone to dust? This is a stunning historical fact and, more than that, a miracle.

I propose to engage the attention of my readers in another "miracle" that occurred in the realm of the cultural life of the Armenian people back in the 5th century A.D. I want to call the genesis of the intellectual and spiritual awakening of the Armenian people also a "miracle". And a miracle it was!

* * *

As I envisage the complete picture of that awakening to enduring values which pertain to the human spirit and mind, I can't help thinking of the splendor of the creation of the Earth. We read in the picturesque account of the creation that, significantly, before anything else could assume form and come into being there was first to be Light. The very first order given by the Creator to the formless elements reveals His divine wisdom: "Let there be Light!"

And there was Light! And once there was Light, then the normal sequence of creation was firmly established. The very "first day" of Creation, God made Light and revealed thereby the essential nature of His being. Conversely, where there is Light there is God at work. Because there was Light first, therefore there could also be men, and human progress in every area of life; in a word, civilization.

I believe the splendor of the Creation was repeated in the life of the Armenian people in the realm of their cultural life in the 5th century. Light broke out then, too, almost as abruptly and brightly as it had at the Creation. That Light broke out, like the tropical sun, in the fullness of its golden glory, with no suggestion of silvery rays of a dawn preceding it. It was a miracle! For, out of the "void" of illiteracy the Armenian mind was equipped, in a twinkling of the eye, with a tool for expressing his most exalted thoughts and sentiments in writing. Has such an achievement been duplicated in the life of any other nation during the fifteen hundred years since the 5th century of the Christian era?

I cannot deal here with the more or less technical problem of whether or not there was Armenian writing before the so-called "invention" of the Armenian alphabet. I will, for practical purposes, assume that there was no writing prior to the 5th century or, if there was a system of writing, it was so useless that it could not possibly serve the grand scheme conceived by the Saints Sahag and Mesrop for the spiritual and intellectual awakening of the Armenian people. Mesrop was the "inventor" of the new set of signs for writing. The word "inventor" is appropriate for describing exactly what happened. The signs were freshly "invented". They did not represent a "rediscovery" of old signs once used and then discarded and completely lost and forgotten.

Up to practically the end of the fourth century Armenians were, generally speaking, an illiterate people. Besides Armenian there was a sprinkling of knowledge of three other foreign languages, depending upon the geographic location in which segments of the people lived. These languages were Persian, Greek and Syriac. If the elite in culture wished to put their thoughts in writing they had to use one of these three languages. In the Graeco-Roman world there was a high degree of culture, because what they thought and spoke they could also write.

Every fact that is observed on the "surface", so to speak, of history has its dimensional values. To evaluate them properly one must look beyond what is obvious. In other words, to grasp the meaning of events which took place in the life of Armenians,

and within the boundaries of Armenia, one must direct one's mind to distant scenes and learn what was happening in the life of other nations.

Two men, more than any others, laid down the enduring foundations of the cultural life of the Armenian people with such prophetic vision that it transcended the element of time and penetrated into the distant future over the span of many centuries. There are no names greater than those of St. Sahag and St. Mesrop, with the exception of St. Gregory the Illuminator, in the entire history of Armenia and Armenians. St. Sahag was the Catholicos, and as great a man as the greatest who have ever held that position of honor and responsibility. He was a scholar, statesman, a pastor, and administrator all at once. St. Mesrop was the equal of his superior, the Catholicos, intellectually and spiritually.

* * *

I want to sketch briefly what significant facts preceded and followed the translation of the Bible into Armenian.

Christianity reached the southern borders of Armenia as early as the first half of the first century. A recognized historian of Armenian Church History, the late Archbishop Malachia Ormanian, a former Patriarch of Constantinople, insists that the "Apostolic origin" of the Armenian church is a matter of historical record provable by indisputable facts. Traditionally or historically it is granted that Thaddeus and Bartholomew were among the earliest Apostles who brought the Gospel to Armenians. The question rises as to what language these two Apostles used to communicate the Gospel to the people they contacted. It is highly doubtful that they could speak Armenian; or that they learned Armenian in preparation for their evangelistic program. Neither can we safely assume that the Armenians understood Aramaic or Hebrew, in which languages these Apostles would preach. The only reasonable supposition we can make as to the language for communication is that it was Greek. Greek was for nearly all of Asia Minor what French or English is at present over many areas of the civilized world. Asia Minor was more thoroughly Hellenized as early as the third century B.C., as a result of its conquest by Alexander the Great and the rule of his successors. It is quite possible that Thaddeus and Bartholomew met Armenians who could speak and understand Greek in that portion of Armenian territory which, when in 287 the land was divided into zones of influence, fell within the Greek zone, or more accurately, the zone of the "Eastern Empire". At one time during the pre-Christian era, the

Armenian court and aristocracy were very much under the spell of Greek culture and language. (Look up the record and find out more details about this phase of our pre-Christian culture.)

Let us now suppose that the earliest Armenian Christians were evangelized by the earliest of the Apostles. But what happened when they passed on? Whatever happened in the wide Roman world happened also within the boundaries of Armenia, namely, the seeds of the Gospel planted here and there took root and in the course of time spread to adjoining territories. When Gregory the Illuminator started his vigorous campaign to evangelize Armenians in toto, back in the late third and fourth centuries, Christianity was not looked upon as an entirely "new religion" with no known adherents. And the proclamation of Christianity as a State Religion around 303 was not a shocking surprise to most of the people of the land. Yes, it is true that Armenia was the first country in the history of the world to adopt Christianity *as the official religion* of the land. It is wrong to state that Armenians were *"the earliest Christians"*. They are not, though they are among the earliest Christians recorded.

But what I want to bring out is that the Gospel was communicated from the earliest period of evangelization, to which I referred, to the very beginning of the 5th century by the *spoken* language. But *hearing* the Gospel was not enough to make the impression desired upon the soul. It had to be *read* also. The need of the written word was felt more and more keenly as time progressed. Nearly a whole century had elapsed since the evangelization of Armenians and still the old pattern of life persisted. What was the remedy for the sad state of affairs in the land?

The answer to this burning question was to make it possible for the people to read the Bible in their own language instead of hearing it read in a foreign language (Greek or Syriac) and translated into Armenian by the reader. The two saints, Sahag and Mesrop, were firmly convinced that Christianity had no chance to endure in Armenia unless the people could have access to the Bible in the Armenian translation. They scanned the situation with clear understanding of the problems involved and decided that for the sustenance of the spiritual life of the people the translation of the Bible was imperative. They decided upon a strategy of action that would insure the life of the people for a thousand years to come. It was *not* a task of urgency for the immediate present; it *was* a task to be undertaken for the distant future. These two prophets looked out beyond all limitations of time and space.

Mesrop launched an ambitious educational plan of gathering around him a group of dedicated young men whom he called "brothers". But he realized pretty soon that he was like a general bound for the conquest of a hostile country with an unarmed army. He could not educate illiterate people without books. And how could he have books when he lacked the signs with which to write books? He told his woes to his superior, Catholicos Sahag who agreed that he should work to "invent" the signs for writing.

The story is long but it is a story of hard labor and triumph. Mesrop travelled widely to find the answer to his prayers. He was in Samosate where, as though in a vision, he finally came upon the realization of his zealous pursuit. He submitted the rough form of his signs to a famous caligrapher called Robanus who gave them the refinement they needed. Now he, at long last, had achieved successfully his task. To test the adaptability and usability of his alphabet he attempted the translation of the Book of Proverbs into Armenian. As he dictated the translation, Robanus, the caligrapher, sitting by his side, put it down in writing on parchment. In the meantime his "brothers" or co-workers lost no time in practicing the signs.

* * *

Now the field was wide open for invasion with a flood of light. St. Sahag assumed the responsibility of carrying the torch of learning to the provinces of Ararat, Taron, Vaspourakan. Mesrop's assignment in the nationwide educational program was the enlightenment of the northern provinces of the land, such as Sunik, Gougark, Alouans and Georgia.

It seemed as though an invisible spirit moved a magic wand over the entire expanse of the land, for schools mushroomed everywhere in a short time. A bishop was appointed over every division of the land to supervise the educational program. Illiteracy yielded to literacy at an amazing speed. Christian ideas and ideals got hold of the people's minds and hearts. Ideas and ideals were pursued with great ardor and interest. The soul of the nation began to be reshaped with an idealism that has typified the Armenian character ever since.

* * *

The success of the educational program depended on qualified educators and books or, using a modern term, "publications". They lost no time in training teachers at home and abroad. But before they could attain full maturity and productivity they could enrich their supply of useful reading matter by translations. Hence, the literary activity at this stage consisted largely of translations.

For translations they needed trained linguists. This need was also amply met by students returning from the universities of the time trained in the languages and philosophies of the time, namely, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Hebrew. Mesrop had received his training, shall we say, as a "graduate student" at Antioch. His teacher was one called Lebanus, greatly famed for his vast knowledge, who had also been the teacher of John Chrysostom, St. Basil and Leonce Haygaz.

* * *

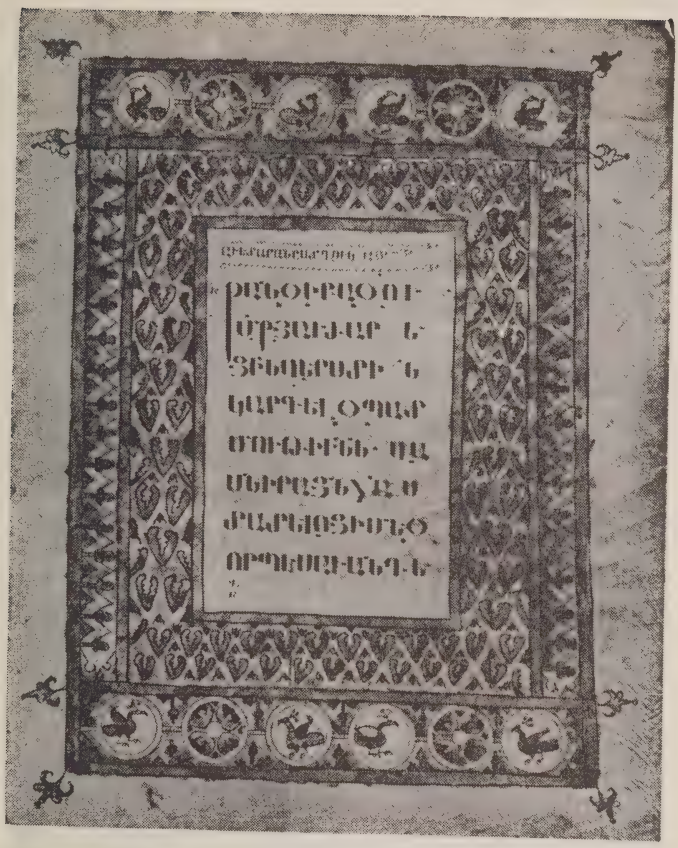
The translation of the Bible was of course the accomplishment of the "Translators" that had the most far-reaching importance for the nation.

There is no unanimity of opinion as to the identity of the text from which the Armenian translation of the Bible was made. The translation, as we have it today, is based on the so-called "Septuagint Text". But the Greek Text was assiduously compared with and checked by the "Peshito", the Syriac Text. (Here again, I suggest that the readers look up sources of information about the Septuagint and the Peshito. Unless this assigned "home work" is done, sufficient benefit will not be derived from the reading of these pages.)

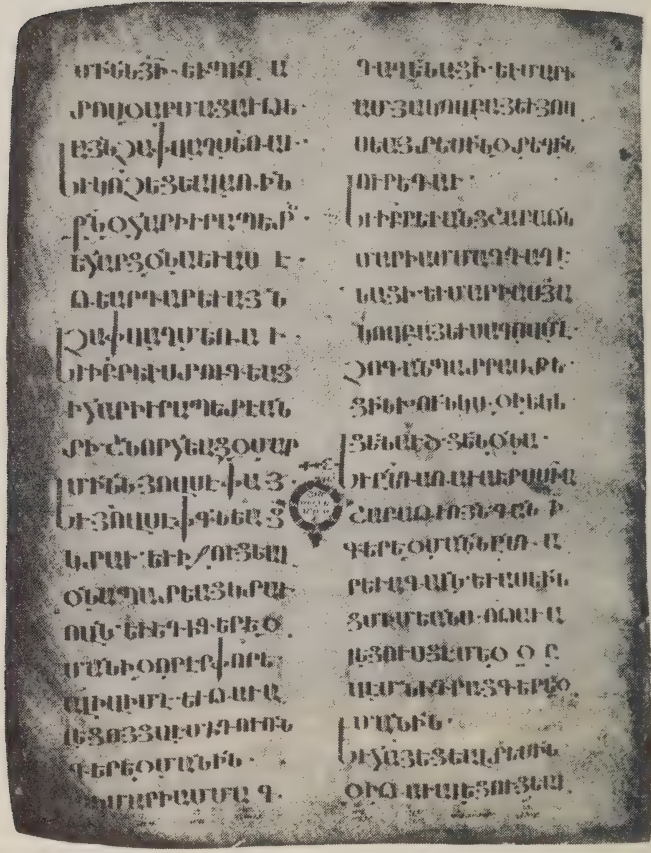
The Latin translation of the Bible now known as the "Vulgate" was done by St. Jerome, a monk, about the same time as the Armenian Translators worked on their task. Jerome secluded himself from the world and worked in a cell in Bethlehem, during the last quarter of the fourth century.

The Bible in classical Armenian, as it is read in the churches, is a revised version of an initial translation done by the Translators. The original translation was completed in six years, in 414. But then Eznik, one of the Translators, a brilliant theologian, returned from Constantinople with a beautiful Greek Text which claimed to be "authoritative and God-given". It was this new Text that caused the Translators to go over their original translation very carefully and revise it.

Now, how can a people, illiterate but a few years before, produce a translation in a language that is the acme of perfection? It is a miracle! With no grammar, and no set rules governing literary form, how could they produce such a gem of literature? We can understand why the Greek text is so perfect. Because Greek was the medium of expression of all the classical writers long centuries before the Bible was translated into it. But not so with the Armenian. Armenian had never been written *before* the translation of the Bible. There was no literary Armenian. As Father Akinian puts it, it was "an uncultivated language, with no ade-



A sample page of Armenian MS (reduced in size) with ornamental margins. The text on this page is the first verse of the Gospel of Luke.



Another sample of Armenian MS. This page has Gospel of Mark, chapters 15:43 to 16:4.

quacy of words to give expression to such ideas as one meets on the pages of the Bible". The task the Translators faced was staggering but they were heroic in spirit, and resourceful to an astounding degree.

Look at the result of the dedicated labor of the Translators and thank God for the "miracle" He worked through them! It is a piece of art unmatched by any other. The French scholar Lacroze (1661-1719) called the Armenian Translation "the Queen of Translations". And no one since then has disputed his estimate of this remarkable achievement. A former professor of the University of Geneva, Switzerland, Georges Kounder, considers the Armenian translation of the Bible "a masterpiece . . . and a source of inspiration of Armenian Literature".

Indeed, the Bible has been not only the inspirer of literature but also the inspirer of every ideal that has given guidance to the Armenians through a national life darkened with suffering and death.

Do you know of any other nation whose literature began with the Bible?

ANOTHER DIMENSION

WE ARE NOW in the Fifth Century of our era. Looking back and estimating its significance in the history of our national culture, we have proudly and rightly called it the "Golden Age". In the light of what I already have said in the previous chapter, you have expected me perhaps to define the significance of this period with another qualifying word calling it the "Age of Miracles". Neither of these names would be a misnomer considering the far-reaching results of the labor of the great leaders during that period of mighty dreams and achievements. These men to whom I have referred, and others whom I will yet introduce, were "torch bearers" and in a true sense—"the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, to them did light spring up". It is exactly this quality of their achievement that reflects the "golden" glory of the age we propose to view together through a mental telescope.

* * *

Speaking in general terms, the age we are considering was typically a religious age for Christian and heathen alike. Religion was the major interest of the people in their cultural life in the entire civilized world of that age. Most of the subjects they discussed in public or private concerned religion directly or indirectly. The gods dominated their thinking as much as their actions and relations. Temples were found everywhere one went. They were numerous because they served two definite purposes. They were, first of all, places where men sought to contact god; or where the finite men tried to explore the source of infinite power dwelling in a god. And, in the second place, they were places where one could seek and find full satisfaction for one's instincts of pleasure; in other words, they functioned the same way that social clubs of our times do. The ritual of worship at the temple was also an occasion for social festivity. This was the universal pattern of religious concept and practice in the Graeco-Roman world within the confines of which was included Armenia.

How to break away from this pattern of thought and practice

when the heathen gods were exchanged for the one true God, was the problem Sahag and Mesrop met squarely and sought to solve with wisdom they received from God. And with divine wisdom they achieved success in a way that, as I stated, was tantamount to a "miracle". They saw the pressing need of the people clearly and met it neatly. The need of the people was a purer concept of religion and its practice. Hence, the translation of the Bible into Armenian! What does this mean? This means that Armenian Christianity had to have doctrinally an *evangelical basis* if it was expected to have a vital and enduring significance in the lives of the people. In this fundamental fact is found the merit of the daring scheme devised and achieved successfully by these two leaders of unrivalled distinction in our entire history.

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We must try to distinguish the difference between the *nature* and the *content* of the remarkable achievement we are discussing.

Speaking of the content of that achievement, I would hesitate to say that the literature produced in this age was of an unusual quality, comparable, for example, to the classical literature of Greece. How could it possibly be so? What was actually produced, outside of translations, was good, considering the newness of the literary efforts of the time. But creation of literature was not an end in itself in the mind of our leaders in that age. It was rather a means to a more vital and pressing end. For them literature was a means of spiritual illumination. They were interested in a purpose of supreme importance, namely, the renewal of the life of the people, a spiritual revolution, a radical change in their thinking, in their desires and hopes, in their conduct, in their sense of vital values. In other words, it was their purpose to replace the prevalent heathen culture with the culture of the Christian religion as expounded in the Bible. These two saints were dreamers of great dreams but also down-to-earth practical men in the attempt to realize their dreams. Unless we appreciate this fact adequately we shall never be able to comprehend the meaning of the rebirth of the Armenian nation in the Fifth Century. A new "culture" was created and developed in that age, yes, but it was *not* a culture for culture's sake.

"Culture", but for what rewarding purpose? That is a question we must never fail to ask ourselves at all times. Culture for culture's sake has no saving power in it, in so far as the life of a nation is concerned. At best, culture is but a means to an end, with far greater meaning than culture itself.

Can a nation survive without culture? Does culture have the

life-giving impulse imbedded in it? Questions like these engaged the keen minds of Sahag and Mesrop. They looked beyond the letter and the book. The ultimate goal they meant to attain was a pattern of life that would insure an enduring quality of character that would enable the Armenian people to live on and on, and play a distinct role in the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth.

We, too, are at the present time agitating for the maintenance of our "culture", and we do well. But do we, I wonder, stop to ask ourselves just for what ultimate purpose we are so eager to maintain our culture? Is it because we want to preserve the integrity of Armenian character, the native soul that distinguishes an Armenian from others? Otherwise, can mere knowledge make a person typically and genuinely Armenian? Why, you can teach Armenian to a Frenchman or a German but will you say that either is an "Armenian" because he can speak Armenian? An Armenian-speaking Frenchman will never bear the spiritual marks of one who is born an Armenian. Our agitation for the maintenance of our national culture is, I am afraid, in danger of missing its purpose. We want Armenian spoken, yes, but we want the Armenian speaker also to recognize his obligation to be an Armenian by marks that characterize the Armenian Sahag and Mesrop had in mind when they endeavored to create a new culture. Armenian culture is a concern of the soul and not of the tongue. I have met Armenians who, by their interests, character, traditions, faith, and ideals are as perfect specimens of Armenians as the followers of St. Vartan were, although they speak English more fluently than Armenian; and I have met other Armenians whom I would have rejected, no matter in what language they spoke, because of their total lack of distinguishing marks of a genuine Armenian. The soul must not be a stranger while the language is familiar.

* * *

We must now try to get our bearings in some other dimensions. To do this we must ask two important questions and answer them briefly.

What were the political conditions under which Armenians lived during the period which we are discussing, the so-called "Golden Age"?

And then again, what were the cultural sources of influence to which Armenians were subjected directly or indirectly?

The answer to the first question is easier than to the second. Any interested person can look up the record and have a fair understanding of the political state of affairs in Armenia during the reign of the Arsacid (Arshagooni) Dynasty beginning with

Tiridates (Dirtad) II (217-238) down to the last in the line, Artaxias (Ardashes) IV.

All I want to do here is to indicate a few salient facts to be borne in mind while studying the political picture of the period.

The major branch of the Arsacid Dynasty ruled over Persia until, in 226 A.D., it was overthrown by a clan of fanatical Zoroastrian priests, called "Sassanians". The woes of Armenia began with this change of dynasties in Persia. These new ruling fanatics pursued the policy of expansion by assimilation or liquidation of their neighbors. The relations between Persia and Armenia degenerated hopelessly when the latter declared Christianity as the official religion of the state in 303. The political defenses of Armenians against the Persians were very weak, so they relied upon the spiritual defenses of a new faith they had acquired. It was not the army Armenians could muster against them that worried the Persians but the moral strength through the light of the Gospel Armenians were building up. As time flowed, the Persians began to feel more and more uncomfortable with the thorn of Christian Armenia that was pressing deeper and deeper in their side. The conflict came to a head in a life-and-death struggle in 451. All of that is familiar.

Neither was Armenia a rose for her western neighbors, the Greeks to delight in its fragrance! Just the contrary. She too was pricked in the side because Armenia would not bow to the biddings of the Emperors in Constantinople but maintained proudly her own integrity of faith and her independence of judgment in the shaping of national policies. The situation was further complicated by the fact that two mighty empires were jealous rivals, and attempted to push Armenia around to suit their own interest. If a Christian state, why shouldn't Armenia favor another Christian state, the Byzantine Empire? They kept pressing the argument. But the price was surrender of religious independence. That price Armenians refused to pay. On the other hand, Persians espoused the friendship of Armenians and failed in securing it because the price set on the bargain counter was surrender of political independence. So, Armenians found themselves, throughout their history, "between the devil and deep sea" in one sense or another.

What happened? Exactly what always happens on the political stage. If one could not grab what he cherished without offending his rival, then why not come to an agreement with the rival to share the prize. That is what the Persians and the Greeks did in 387 A.D. That is one of the most important dates in the history of Armenia to remember. It is a date that marks the end of political independence, and the *division* of Armenia between the Greeks and

the Persians. From 387 to 885, for five centuries, Armenia was the pawn of the Persians, Greeks and Arabs.

It must be noted that Sahag and Mesrop initiated their plan of spiritual illumination of the Armenian people immediately after the division of the country into two political "zones" which really spelled loss of independence. Why? I have already answered that question: Because they wanted to counter-balance political losses with spiritual gains. If the body died they wanted to save the soul. And that pattern of action has been persistently followed down through the ages up to the present. This is set down as the principle of survival. And whatever nation has failed to follow it has died and disappeared. I refer you to Toynbee's "Study of History".

Vramshapouh was the titular king during this critical period. God couldn't have appointed a better man to sponsor, with good graces, the schemes of the two great Armenians who dedicated their lives to forestall spiritual bankruptcy on the heels of the political bankruptcy of the nation. You know what they did. This entire story is like a circle; no matter where you start it, you come back to the same point. It is well that it is so. It couldn't have been otherwise because there is the divine element in it. The beginning is the end, and the end is the beginning.

Vramshapouh lived long enough to see the Armenian alphabet but died before the translation of the Bible was completed. He had done his share in promoting the movement that ushered in a new era of spiritual revival. And that was enough to crown his head with glory. As a puppet king he remained on his throne for twenty-two years, from 382 to 414 A.D.

The axiom, "like father like son", unfortunately could not apply to the last of Arsacid kings, Artashes IV, the son of Vramshapouh, who, unlike his father who had brought glory to his throne, dishonored his exalted position with his unruly conduct.

Now, contemplate the picture as it unfolds before your eyes. Something of terrific significance happens at a time, and under conditions, which by every argument of logic should not have happened. Have you not heard the refrain: Culture, art, literature are the fruits of *prosperous* times? Suffering is barren, unproductive. But is this true? Study the individual lives of the creative geniuses of the world and see if they produced their creations in luxury or suffering and deprivation. No "Dark Age" will ever obstruct the fruition of a genius. Nothing can stop the march of the triumphant spirit of man!

And a glorious illustration of this is the achievement of these Armenians with whose names is associated the most significant period of our history—the Golden Age.

LITERARY MINES—A SECOND DIMENSION

NOW WE ARE ready to answer, however inadequately, the second and the more difficult question: What were the sources of inspiration of the so-called "Senior" and "Junior Translators" who, under the leadership of Saints Sahag and Mesrop, initiated and shaped the movement of the cultural awakening of the fifth century that has, by the common consent of literary critics and historians of later ages, been called "The Golden Age of Armenian Literature". "Golden" primarily in view of the perfection and purity of the language used in the output of literature in that particular age, crowned, as we have already seen, by the Armenian translation of the Bible; also, by the quality of the content or subject-matter of that literary output, either in translations or in original creations.

Before I turn to the main task of answering the question I have posed, let me inject, at this point, a few casual remarks about the classical, and perhaps more the literary Armenian of the Golden Age. Any language must have its grammar; that is, roughly a set of rules by which it can be expressed correctly in writing. To our way of thinking and practice, grammar precedes, and regulates the written expression of a language. We are taught grammar at school to be able to use the language we learn, or know, correctly in speaking and writing. By the same token, the grammatical rules for any language are based upon the literary expression in that language judged to be perfect.

When the Translators attempted the translation of the Bible they had no standard rules of grammar by which to be governed in making their sentences as they labored on the Greek text, for instance. They had no precedent to follow; so they had to make a precedent, and what they did became the standard pattern for literary expression for others to follow. To state the fact crudely, the Translators started *without* the help of Armenian grammar, but as they wrote and translated they also created all the rules and principles of grammar and syntax which someone or other could later gather, formulate and systematize. But what the Translators did was not

fanciful and self-created; on the contrary it was linguistically sound and correct because they followed Greek grammar and syntax as they proceeded with the translation of the Greek text of the Bible. So that Armenian grammar is historically and basically Greek. This means that there is a literary kinship between Armenian and Greek. Greek, for this reason, lent itself to translation into the Armenian language better than any other language. Further, it is found that when an Armenian translation from Greek is retranslated back to Greek, the Greek is much more like the original than it would be if translated from another language. There have been instances where the original text of a book in Greek was lost and it had to be retranslated back to Greek from the Armenian, with the result that the reader of the Greek translation would hardly suspect that it was anything but the genuinely original Greek. Because of the near-identity of the Armenian syntax with the classical Greek syntax all a translator must do is, speaking loosely, to arrange the words in the order in which they appear in the sentences. There is, therefore, the grace of classical Greek reflected in classical Armenian, and in that fact we have good reason to take great pride!

* * *

Turning now to the familiar and inevitable question: In what literary atmosphere did the generation of the Translators breathe? Or, what literary mines did they explore to shape their thinking and to guide them in their literary projects of either translations or original writings? I would call this another dimensional study of our subject, namely, the Armenian literature in the "Golden Age". After all, it is absurd to imagine that these men worked in a literary vacuum, completely detached from an outside world of literary endeavor and, more or less, rich productivity. Originality is a term with a relative meaning. It does not imply ignorance of the thinking and output of ideas by others either during one's lifetime, or before. The culture of any nation is not a phenomenon completely isolated from the culture of other nations, I would even say, of the world. Cultures are inter-related and inter-dependent. The culture and literature of the Armenians have not been exceptions to this general rule. The question we are therefore asking is important.

I have already tried to make clear the fact that the thinking in the age which we have under consideration ran in religious channels. So the inspiration and nurture of a mind religiously inclined should come from minds similarly oriented. Where then were these sources of inspiration and nurture?

Christianity was comparatively a new religion in the Romar world. It was clearly on the defensive during the first three or

four centuries. Its doctrines were challenged. There was no common understanding of the basic ideas of the Gospels. Varying interpretations conflicted with each other, gave rise to sects which, if they could not be combatted by argument, were persecuted and liquidated somehow or other. After a terrific struggle to survive the pressures from the heathen world which threatened to smother it completely, Christianity had to bolster itself against forces within its own body which also threatened to sap its vitality.

Byzantine emperors, like all absolute monarchs, insisted on conformity of belief to ease the strain of political discipline which they had to exercise over the population of the vast empire under their rule. Hence, whenever an idea and its propagators got out of control, a "Church Counsel" was called to settle it and reestablish theological views and doctrines in conformity with orthodoxy.

Fortunately or unfortunately the Armenian mind differs from the Greek mind in that it is not philosophically inclined. The Armenian mind has always run more smoothly along lines of arts, like architecture, painting, poetry, music, than philosophy and theology. So that our interest in theological debates has always been limited. Once Armenians had mastered the basic ideas of Christianity, and adopted a creed, and a working order and discipline for the cultivation of Christian life, they desisted from participation in "Councils" except the first, held in Nicaea in 325, and the other two which followed in Constantinople, in 381, and in Ephesus, in 431, respectively. They were able to say like Timothy, "I know whom I have believed", and stop there; and stop there they did since the fifth century, and they have not been any worse for it than others who have done contrarywise and have continued to wander through theological and doctrinal labyrinths and rush their disputations from one Council to another to save orthodoxy from heterodoxy.

* * *

But the Translators of the fifth century, or, using a broader nomenclature, the literary men or intellectuals, availed themselves of every opportunity to acquaint themselves with the theological ideas of those who attacked Christianity and of others who defended it. Most of them had traveled to distant lands to seek and increase their knowledge of ideas and languages, and had spent years at university centers. They had met the distinguished men of the time and had learned from them about Christian writers and their ideas.

They surely were familiar with the so-called "Christian Apologists" who had devoted the powers of their mind to uphold and defend Christianity against its enemies. These Apologists flourished

An ornamental frontispiece of the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew.

during the second century and on through the fifth century. The Armenian students who would, in turn, become teachers needed the knowledge of the arguments in defense of Christianity that was the religion of their own people and state and which they were determined to maintain.

Let me introduce just a few of these Apologists who possibly provided the ideological foundation upon which Armenians were to stand firmly during a national crisis in the middle of the fifth century (familiarly known as the heroic war waged by Vartan and his brave men), and in all crises throughout their entire history.

Here is Justin, the "philosopher", who was finally martyred. He reflected Plato's mind in his thinking. He was an itinerant preacher and would readily expound the truths of the Christian religion wherever he went. While in Rome, he addressed an "apology" to the ruling emperor of the time, Antoninus Pius; and years later, another to Marcus Aurelius. His third apology is in the form of a dialogue the object of which is to prevail upon the Jews to accept the Messiahship of Jesus. He was tolerant of "wisdom" wherever its source might be, whether heathen or Christian, for, he argued, Christ was the crown and fulfilment of all wisdom. Unlike most of the theologians and apologists of the West, he considered philosophy an asset to faith rather than a liability.

Tertullian was a lawyer-apologist representing the North-African or the "Alexandrian School" during the third century. His attack on the heathen is direct and uncompromising. Being familiar with Roman law his writings are sprinkled with legal phrases. His vehemence in the expression of his ideas and feelings does not overshadow his genius.

But possibly Origen was the "king" of the earlier Christian apologists. It was he who took arms against Celsus, the arch enemy of Christians and Christianity. It was during the reign of Antoninus that Celsus wrote his infamous book called "A True Account" (*Logos Alethes*) with which he attempts to prove that Christianity is a perversion of the religion of the ancients, of Mosaic origin and denying any originality in its teaching. He discredits it by whatever argument he can command, concluding that Christianity, contrary to its claims, appeals to the basest of men.

Fifty years after the publication of this book by Celsus, Origen undertook the task of replying to it. He quoted Celsus extensively and met argument by argument, refuting all his charges against Christianity. Origen was a prolific writer. It is claimed that he wrote so many books and pamphlets that nobody could read them all in a lifetime. He is considered to be the best expression of the so-called "Alexandrian" theology. He is the first who anticipated the

problem of the conciliation of Science with Theology. He tried to demonstrate that the Bible was the common ground upon which Knowledge and Faith could meet. His book on what he calls "First Principles" was the earliest attempt at Systematic Theology.

Another apologist and a contemporary of Tertullian was Cyprian, also, like him, a lawyer by profession, who was converted to Christianity when he was forty-six years of age. He was ordained a bishop two years later because of his rare intellectual and spiritual qualities. He functioned as an effective spiritual leader of his time for the twelve years he was permitted to live after his conversion. He was distinguished by the practical method with which he approached all his problems, reflecting the spirit of the West rather than the mysticism of the East.

With the literature produced by these men and others, whose names only will I mention, the Armenian intellectuals of the Golden Age were well acquainted, and enlightened if not also influenced by them.

Practically contemporary to the "Translators" are the representatives of a group of distinguished religious leaders and writers who are classed in the "Antiochan School", so-called. To name some among others: John Chrysostom (347-407), Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem (350-386), Theodore of Mopsuesta (393-428), Theodoret (390-457).

And the following names are shining examples of the "Alexandrian School:" Eusebius of Caesarea (in Palestine) 270-341; Athanasius (298-373), the foremost name among the clergy that attended the Council of Nicaea in 325; Epiphanius (315-403); Basil (330-379); Gregory Nazianzen (325-389); Gregory of Nyassa (335-395).

And in the West the great leaders who influenced the thinking of the East, and were in turn influenced by it, were, to name just a few: Hillary of Poitiers (320-366), Ambrose (340-397), Jerome (346-420), Rufinus (345-410), Augustine (354-430).

Most of these names may mean nothing to most of my young readers. Those who are eager to learn something about them may very conveniently consult any good book on church history. I can only act as the guide and let them do the walking along the narrow path of knowledge. My purpose is not, to repeat, to provide all the details in a continuous story, but only to indicate the interrelationship between the basic plan of the story as a whole and its minor details which may either be filled in or omitted without much profit, on one hand, or loss, on the other.

But before I conclude this chapter of my story I want, for obvious reasons, to introduce one author not only because of his significance as the earliest church historian, but because of his particular significance to the Armenians of the "Golden Age", and in the ensuing centuries.

This is Eusebius of Caesarea in Palestine, who is called the "Father of Church History". He was a man endowed with many abilities. The late Prof. Foakes-Jackson of Union Theological Seminary speaks of him as "an unwearied student, who at the same time took active part in the great events of the age. He combined the functions of a biblical scholar, apologist, antiquarian, historian, chronographer and panegyrist, with the experience of an ecclesiastical adviser of the emperor. In temper he was conservative, cautious and conciliatory. He passed through a great persecution without being either a martyr or an apostate, and through the Arian controversy as one who favored neither extreme."

He died around the year 341. But he lived a life full of enduring achievements. He had one of the largest libraries of his time. He read and studied all the books he collected. The pervading motive of all his writings was apologetic. He was dominated by the idea that Jesus was the revelation of God. His opus major, the "History of the Christian Church", is an attempt to show that God accomplished his great purpose through the Church. This work is divided into ten "Books", each subdivided into chapters, and covering the history of the church beginning with the birth of Jesus and closing with the victory of Constantine over his rival in the fourth century. He gives the succession of the Apostles, introduces the order of events, the distinguished leaders of the church, records the life of heretics, and the punishment of the Jews, and finally, the persecutions to which the church was subjected.

We bypass his other works which are largely of an apologetic nature.

It is the Church History by this author that, according to the statement by our own historian Moses of Khoren, was translated into Armenian by the express order of St. Mesrop. This single example is an evidence of the fact I am trying to impress upon my readers that the Golden Age was created by wide contacts with the outside world of intellectual life. And the remarkable achievement of the Translators lay in the fact that they succeeded in tapping the rich resources of the human mind outside Armenia for the creation and development of a native culture in all its forms with emphasis on Literature.

ARMENIA ON THE WORLD MAP
A THIRD DIMENSION

WE HAVE so far considered Armenia of the Fifth Century within the framework of her relationship with political and cultural developments which took place in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire. I will, at this point, turn to another "dimension" in which to consider further our subjects.

What bearing, if any, did the political, social and intellectual life of countries far removed from Armenia have on the development of her culture in the Fifth Century?

I will suggest an answer to that important question and that answer, however inadequate, will in my estimation constitute the third "dimension" in which I would like my readers to view the over-all picture of the "Golden Age". In other words, I want—as the sub-title of this chapter implies—to place Armenia where it belongs on the world map, roughly for the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian Era.

* * *

Some historians are inclined to draw a sharp line between the East and the West. Their obsession is that "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet!" An obsession responsible for much of the mutually harmful rivalries, struggles, misunderstandings and hostilities between the East and the West. And at the present time, possibly more than ever, mankind seems to be solely possessed by this obsession jeopardizing not only peace but the very existence of life upon this earth. Until the human mind rids itself of that monstrous obsession no hope of enduring peace, with its accessory blessing, can ever be realized.

Politically and otherwise, Armenia has never been like an "island" on the map of the world. It has never been completely cut off from all contacts with peoples of countries far and near. The impact of internationalism may not have been as strong on Armenia and other countries in the fifth century as it now is; and yet no nation then, and now, could live an isolated life without its own na-

tional boundaries and survive and make progress in any line of human endeavor. The witness of history is that whatever happened in the life of neighboring countries appreciably affected the conditions of life in Armenia. The political climate of Armenia was more or less conditioned by the political climate of the entire world. This is so now; it was so at all times. The difference between the internationalism of the fifth century and the internationalism of the twentieth century is found in the fact that, whereas at the present time peoples of all lands are more fully and more speedily informed of whatever goes on in any part of the world, in ancient times such information traveled extremely slowly for obvious reasons; and it often vanished on the way. But this fact does not mean that the ancients were dull and lethargic, or that nothing exciting ever happened in and between nations. An ordinary reader of history of ancient times will be impressed by the liveliness and restlessness of peoples of different lands in the East or in the West. Wars and conquests constantly brought peoples of distant lands into immediate contact with each other. If they were unacquainted with each other—not having lived together—they got acquainted while fighting and killing one another. . . . In a true sense, then, the East was in the West; and again, the West was in the East.

Let us not permit ourselves to think for a moment that Armenia was tucked away in a far corner of the Eastern World and completely ignored by the West, and beyond the reach of Western civilization. The Romans were politically and intellectually as close neighbors of Armenians as were the nations in the north and south of their land. If internationalism is to be defined in terms of movements and contacts between nations, and the effects of these contacts, bad or good, upon the lives of their respective peoples, then internationalism was as vital a factor in the fifth century (as it has been in earlier centuries) as it is at the present time.

We can understand and interpret Armenian history correctly only in terms of universal history. We must not be satisfied with answers to the question of what happened IN Armenia, or TO Armenia, if we propose to study the history of Armenia not only "vertically" but also "horizontally." So, we have to try to learn of what happened in the WORLD even when nothing has happened IN Armenia, or TO Armenia.

Armenians are apt to be, like all small nationalities, too self-conscious and self-centered. They like to talk of themselves boastfully; seldom admiringly of others. They seem to be blinded by an exaggerated national pride and are unable to appreciate virtues and achievements similar or superior to theirs. The ultra-nationalism of

Armenians has been a big stumbling block on their path, making it difficult for them to make unbiased judgments about others, jeopardizing the very interests of the nation they feign to protect. Most of the histories of Armenia written by Armenian historians bear on every page evidence of the bias I am speaking about. Readers and writers of Armenian histories do well to replace the microscope they use with a telescope, so as to be able to evaluate and interpret the content of history in an international framework.

* * *

What was taking place in the larger world outside Armenia proper when she was feverishly engaged in a task of bringing about the cultural awakening of her people? Let us locate Armenia in the international scene in the century under our consideration.

The Roman Empire got a new lease on life when Constantine the Great moved his capital to Constantinople in 330 A.D. By this act he changed the name and the character of the empire. The West became East; the Roman became Greek. As the light of the spirit flickered in the West, it gained in brilliance in the East. As one historian has remarked, the Eastern Empire "embodied a tradition much more ancient than that of Rome . . . and while the real Roman Empire crumpled completely in four centuries, this Hellenic Roman Empire held out for more than eleven centuries—from 312, the beginning of the reign of Constantine the Great, to 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks."

What then happened to Rome? Every college freshman knows the answer to that question. The picture, in a few bold strokes, is what follows.

The most decisive factor in the situation which brought about changes of fateful consequences was Christianity, exactly the same factor which, as we already have seen, was responsible for the changes in Armenia.

The motives of Constantine the Great and those of Tiridates III (Dirtad), the Armenian King, were not the same as they both proclaimed Christianity as the religion of their respective states, within a period of about twenty-five years. Constantine was controlled by political considerations in his decision and action. He was the ruler of a vast empire and faced disturbing problems concerning the solidarity and endurance of his empire. He favored Christianity because it lent itself conveniently to the realization of his political designs. He saw what was evident to everybody, that Christianity was gaining in numbers and power in the Empire. He also saw that with its spiritual vitality and aggressiveness, Christianity had a

regenerative and purifying influence upon the life of the people in his empire. And finally, he fully appreciated the fact that Christianity could serve as a unifying force in an empire of which the population was a conglomeration of peoples of varying national origins, traditions, cultures and religious beliefs and practices. Therefore, as a favorite church historian of mine (one of my university professors) puts it, "as the Empire had much to learn from Christianity, so had Christianity, on its way to maturity and power, much to learn from the Empire. Indeed, as the Empire weakened and went to pieces from moral, political, and economic causes, Christianity grew stronger and more ambitious, but it also became more worldly, political, and immoral."

In full view of the repeated "eruptions of barbarians" eating into the vitals of the Empire, Constantine shrewdly turned to Christianity as a source of power which could stem the threat of decay and collapse of the imperial structure. He himself did not wholeheartedly commit himself to the new religion. He held on to his title of "Pontifex Maximus" by which he was still recognized to be the High Priest of pagan worship. He was a great builder, for he wanted to beautify his new capital to rival the splendor of Rome. He appropriated large sums of money for the building of churches as well. However, neither then nor now does it take much Christianity to build church edifices. . . As a half pagan like Constantine took pride in the building of churches, so have half pagans in all ages taken pride in church building. That was an easy way compared with the more difficult task of rendering the soul a "temple of God", which task they by-passed. . .

Constantine favored the church in other ways, too. He restored to them their burial grounds and other properties which had been taken away from them; he exempted churches from taxes; and bestowed on them many gifts enriching them greatly. But the material enrichment of the church distracted her from spiritual enrichment; even more, in the course of time it sapped her spiritual vitality and regenerative power.

Constantine bribed his official entourage into conversion to Christianity. He bribed the church into obedience to his imperial will. And the tradition thus established in the Empire persisted, unfortunately, down through the ages to our own times. Christ in many quarters is still subservient to human will and embellishments of authority. . .

The motives of the King of Armenia, Tiridates III, on the other hand, were mixed. They were not strictly political, although a streak of it can be traced in them; neither were they purely religious. His

conversion, I am inclined to believe, was due to emotional impulses. People usually react in two different ways to critical situations: some suffer because of the existing situation, and others benefit by it. Tiridates, I think, must be classed with the latter. He was personally benefited by the healing power of the new religion, so he believed in it and adopted it. The conversion of the Armenian people to Christianity is due to the dedicated efforts of St. Gregory and not to the action of the king, as was the case with Constantine the Great to at least a large extent. Constantine did not have another St. Gregory to stand by him and to inspire and guide him spiritually. Constantine was, as one historian has suggested, "a lonely mind". Furthermore, Tiridates had practically no problem of unification of his country, for it was already united. And defects in that unity could easily be explained away in terms of weaknesses of human nature and the topography of the country. There certainly existed rivalries between the feudal lords (*nakharars*); but rivalries there would be under all conditions anyway whether the country was pagan or Christian. Also, the topography of the country created minor problems of disunity which, however, never proved to be insurmountable.

* * *

The period in history we are considering practically coincided with the age in which Armenian culture and literature flourished to a remarkable degree, but let us remember that it was not a period in which peace prevailed on the face of the earth. Just the contrary.

We all know that Rome, once the incontestable ruler of the known world, had declined and was ready to fall at the impact of invasions of vigorous tribes of Germanic origin. What remained of Rome and its western empire with all its glory and power was reduced to dust and ashes. Alaric sacked Rome around 410, and the Roman Empire was subdivided into what is called "Barbarian Kingdoms".

By a curious coincidence, in the same year (451 A.D.) in which the Armenians were engaged in a fateful battle at Avarair against the Persian hordes, determined to maintain the integrity of the Christian faith at whatever cost, the Romans and their allies were engaged in a desperate battle against Huns, under Attila, at Chalons. Within a few years after Chalons (to be exact, in 455) the Vandals fell upon Rome and sacked and ruined it completely. What now remained of the Roman Empire in the West was a pitiable shadow of an empire. All her vast possessions, such as Illyricum, Gaul, Britain, Spain and Africa, were swept away. The Empire died in

476. An embassy took the royal vestments and the insignia of the imperial office to Constantinople and offered them to the then ruling emperor, Zeno. Thus what was left of the Empire, a shrunken patch of territory within Italy, became a province of the Empire in the East which Constantine the Great had established a little over a century before.

* * *

The collapse of the Roman Empire in the West brought in the "Dark Ages". But, by contrast, with the beginning of the "Dark Ages" in Europe, the Age of Enlightenment dawned in Armenia. The victory at Chalons ended up with the defeat of the spirit of man. The defeat at Avarair became the symbol of moral and spiritual triumph of man. The light went out in the West. Light shined brightly in a far off little country in the East that was Armenia. A powerful Empire lay prostrate and forgotten; but an empire of the enlightened spirit rose in the hearts and minds of the Armenian people. The Armenian people, too, were menaced by the onslaught of "barbarians" but these "barbarians" were Ignorance, Paganism, Perverted Philosophies, Spiritual Darkness, and the like.

The imperial throne of Rome was eventually occupied by Popes. That transferred the rivalry between the West and the East from a political to an ecclesiastical position, creating a new set of problems which, still unsolved, were inherited by the ensuing ages. Armenians have managed to keep out of these problems but they got involved in them during the era of the Crusades, when they came into direct contact with the nations of the West.

Armenians have been extremely sensitive to the civilizing influence at work in the entire world. Their thinking, their aspirations, their hopes have all been directly or indirectly guided by the thought and achievements of other nations. In the light of this fact it is necessary that we revive the national life of Armenians with a perspective as inclusive as the whole world.

Armenians have sometimes been called the "Europeans of the East" because they have lived in constant spiritual and intellectual contact with the West throughout their entire history. It is this fact that I have been eager to impress upon my readers. Or, I have tried to open a window for the mind through which to look out and see the panorama of the world at large just as Armenians themselves saw it in the age, or ages, through which they struggled to achieve their spiritual emancipation and enlightenment.

History and literature go hand in hand. You can understand one well only in terms of the other. History is the mother of Culture;

but, in turn, it is nourished by the creation of Culture—by its artists, its poets, its scientists, its writers. What I have done in this chapter may seem like going at my subject at a tangent; but I feel sure that I have gone to its very heart, only by another dimensional approach.

I have lingered in and around the Fifth Century of Armenian history because it is the very foundation upon which the entire life of the nation rests firmly. We cannot understand the development of Armenian Literature without understanding the literary achievements of the "Golden Age". Moreover, as I stated at the outset, I am testing a new method of approach to a subject which, I believe, has usually been treated rather conventionally. Once this method is tried and found sound, and the course in which to proceed is chartered, the going will, I hope, be comparatively easy.

How about the principal authors of the "Golden Age" and the content and value of their contributions? That segment of our study I will take up in my next chapter.

NOW THE ACTORS OFF THE STAGE

REMEMBER, please, that in my approach to the subject of Armenian Literature I must keep my readers constantly aware of what I would call its "perspective values". As we go along we must always realize the fact that we are removed by fourteen hundred years from the period in which flourished a national culture and literature on which I am trying to focus the attention of my readers, and in which I am eager to interest them. I would like them to find out for themselves, with such guidance as I am trying to offer, the content, the meaning and the development of that culture and literature. But to be able to do that they must detach themselves from the present and transport themselves spiritually and intellectually to the age in which that culture and literature had their birth and growth. However difficult the task may be, I have taken it upon myself to struggle with it so as to enable my readers, in so far as I can, to have a "feel" of the brilliance of these ancient minds and of the magnitude of their achievements in the field of culture and literature within a period of less than a full century.

The "Golden Age" has continued to shine with its undiminished brilliance through the centuries and down to our own days. Or, in other words, the light of the Armenian mind and spirit never again did shine with greater brilliance during the ensuing fifteen centuries as it did in the "Golden Age". I must, however, qualify my statement with two reservations: First, the flowering of Armenian literature and scholarship in recent years in Armenia proper, which promises the dawning of another "Golden Age" with one unfortunate defection in literary style and distortion of spelling. And in the second place, the glow of the torch of learning the Mechitarists lighted in the early years of the eighteenth century, inspired by the creative genius of St. Sahag and St. Mesrop, and dedicated to the task of the creation of another "Golden Age" comparable with the original "Golden Age" of the fifth century.

I have so far outlined the glorious results of the efforts of the divinely-inspired and divinely-endowed leaders such as St. Sahag

and St. Mesrop were. But I have not introduced these men as individuals; nor those whom they trained to be their assistants and later their successors to complete the task their masters had begun. And as we already know they had geared their efforts to the attainment of one definite object which was, in the last analysis, the re-creation of a new nation. Armenians were, racially, historically, physically, the same before, during, and after the fifth century; but spiritually (in the broad sense of the word) they were different after Sahag and Mesrop and a legion of devoted assistants had worked on them for some years. Their work had fateful significance; it decided the destiny of Armenia and Armenians through the ages to come. They made a new nation out of the old one; and the new was markedly different from the old.

* * *

This was a "miracle". But who were these miracle workers?

First and foremost, God Himself. Is this an odd answer, or perhaps, a distasteful answer because of its theological implications? Let us think without bias and sophistication. The God of Israel was also the God of Armenia. We do delight in calling God, "the God of our fathers". We have rightfully a possessive attitude towards Him. Indeed, as Moses was inspired and guided by God for the deliverance of his people from political bondage, so were Sahag and Mesrop inspired and guided by the spirit of the same God to plan and execute the deliverance of the Armenian people from spiritual bondage.

I happen to belong to that particular class of students of history who are inclined to interpret history in terms of spiritual forces which determine its course and character. I am out of sympathy with the views of another school which the French call "economic determinists", who interpret every event in history in terms of economic forces in operation. In simple words, I firmly stand on the side of realism against materialism. I doubt not that God plays, in some mysterious way, a definite role, as in the life of an individual, so also in the life of a nation. And the entire history of Armenia is a demonstration of the wisdom and power of God at work in the life of the nation.

Then, these two humans as "miracle workers"—Sts. Sahag and Mesrop. And for this particular portion of my paper, St. Sahag only.

Who was Sahag?

He was a descendant of St. Gregory the Illuminator; a fifth generation representative of the distinguished family of Bartevs.

But first a word or two on St. Gregory. If you know that he was the evangelizer of Armenia, you know what is vital to know about him for that was his distinctive achievement. He illuminated the land with the light of the Gosepl of Christ. The Christian Church he established is named after his title that is used interchangeably with his baptismal name, Gregory. "Loussavortchagan" has, according to my own interpretation, a threefold meaning: (a) it means the church which "Loussavoritch" (the Illuminator) established; (b) it means the church that has the light (the truth); and (c) it means it is a church with a distinctive mission which is to radiate its light like a lighthouse set upon a hill. What a beautiful name; and what a meaningful name! I tried hard and in vain to find another denominational name which in its beauty and meaningfulness could be matched with the name "Loussavortchagan".

And let me inject this thought a propos of this subject: Every Armenian who is a part of the "Loussavortchagan" Church has a calling or responsibility for being a "loussavoritch"—a personal source of illumination. It is not enough to be a "container" or preserver of the truths of the Gospel; he should be a "reflector" of these truths in his thoughts, in his speech, and in his daily life. In the broad sense of the word, every Armenian who is a true Christian at heart, is a "Loussavortchagan"; and if he is not, he should be. In my own estimation, and according to my own standards, there is only one kind of Armenian, and that is the "loussavortchagan" (illuminating) Armenian, in the sense in which I have defined the word.

And Sahag was a shining example of the spirit, thought, and life of his forebear, the "Illuminator".

The succession to the Catholicate of the Armenian Church was, by design and choice, reserved to the immediate descendants of St. Gregory, or to members of the Bartev family; certainly so during the century immediately after the evangelization of the lar .

Succession in this office barred celibacy as a prerequisite for election to the exalted position of Catholicos. There was no canon law against marriage for the clergy. Celibacy was a voluntary status and, indeed, a mark of self-dedication to Christ and to the service of the church, and of holiness. Of the six Bartevs who in succession occupied the seat of the Armenian Catholicate only one was a celibate bishop; all the rest were married men. It is true that they were married prior to their election to the Catholicate, but then that does not change the fact of their actual status.

It must also be noted that the desire or design for reserving the leadership of the Armenian church to the descendants of St. Greg-

ory was due to two important considerations. In the first place, this was an age in which the consciousness of "blood" and class was deep-rooted. Royal or aristocratic "blood" was a determining factor in all appointments or elections to high offices at the court or in the church. Personal ability and talent were often sacrificed then (as indeed they are now) to considerations of "name" and social rank. Gregory himself stood very close to royalty. There were marriages contracted between the descendants of St. Gregory and the royal family. For instance, Gregory's grandson, Houssig (later Catholicos), was married to King Tiran's (340-350) sister; and Houssig's two sons, Pap and Adanagine, had each a royal princess for a wife.

Then, in the second place, there was the charm and prestige of Gregory's name they wanted to utilize in establishing the authority of the Catholicate.

Sahag himself had royal blood in his veins, if that means anything to us today. His great grandfather was, as I mentioned, King Tiran's brother-in-law, and his grandfather was the king's son-in-law. But what of it? The man himself was worth more than royalty, and ten times over. As a matter of fact it would have been better for him if the blood of dissolute ancestors did not flow in his veins. King Tiran had disgraced himself with immoralities of the vilest kind, and involvements in crimes. It was he, who, in a moment of rage, caused the murder of his brother-in-law, Houssig, then Catholicos, because Houssig had courageously and resolutely stopped him from entry to the church which the king wanted to desecrate with his presence. Then again, Sahag's grandfather, Adanagine, and his grand uncle, Pap, were both soaked in sin and were as good-for-nothing creatures as had ever walked this earth since Adam.

* * *

The succession of Gregory's descendants was interrupted twice: once, for a short period of four years after the violent death of Houssig in 347; and again, after the death of Nerses the Great, between the years 373 and 386. Reason? Because there was no eligible successor in the Bartev family.

Houssig, the grandson of Gregory, had twin sons, Pap and Adanagine, to whom I referred, both of whom were moral degenerates. Every effort to save them from their sinfulness and to induce them to dedicate themselves to the service of the church proved futile. They were even ordained forcibly as deacons, with the hope that this might entice them to higher orders and to a changed life. But deacon or no deacon, these two profligate twins

A sample of ornamental book cover. Carvings on silver are the work of Armenian craftsmen. This one was made in Cesarea, in 1687 A.D.

of Houssig persisted in leading a shameful life until, one day, they found out the truth of the saying that "the end of sin is death". For while at an orgy of drinking and sinning they were struck dead by lightning.

We are all familiar with the story of how Eli, who himself was a righteous man serving the Lord faithfully, fell from grace before the Lord, because of the sinful life his sons were leading. The story of Houssig and his twin sons is a picture similar to Eli's story. How to exlpain the mystery of similarity of causes and difference of results? I do not know. But this I do know; whatever the explanation, the fact stands out indisputably that what is wrong is somehow righted; that all distortions of human nature and human history are not permanent; that, at some point in the normal course of time all problems are resolved; that justice triumphs over evil, light over darkness, truth over falsehood.

Yes, the son of as degenerate a man as Adanagine turns out to be one of the greatest Catholici among the 162 who, in the past sixteen hundred years, have been elevated to that position of dignity and authority.

I am tempted to deviate from my immediate subject and introduce here to my readers Nerses the Great with his remarkable achievements, but limitations of space will not permit me to yield to that temptation. I will only state casually that Nerses was the forerunner of Sahag and Mesrop. He prepared the way for them to dream greater dreams and accomplish greater deeds than he did. Without a Nerses there could not be a Sahag; and without a Sahag there could not be an Age of Enlightenment—a "Golden Age"—and without a Golden Age there could not be an Armenian nation still surviving.

* * *

The Bartev family has given a trinity of greatness to the Armenian nation: Gregory the Illuminator, Nerses the Great, and Sahag (may we call him the "miracle-worker"?). The late patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Malachia Ormanian, calls all three of these great leaders "Illuminators", specifying the particular role in the common task of illumination, thus: Gregory, "the illuminator of the soul"; Nerses, "the illuminator of the heart"; and Sahag, "the illuminator of the mind". I dare not contradict such a statement behind which there is the authority of a scholar of vast knowledge, but in my own estimation of the intellect and achievements of Sahag, he stands head and shoulders above the other two. Sahag did what Gregory and Nerses could, and had done; but, in addition, he also did what they could not, and did not do. The burden of my argu-

ments in these papers has been the fact that Sahag (with the help of Mesrop) undertook to recreate a new nation—new in soul, heart and mind, all at once—with one majestic effort, in which he succeeded gloriously.

I will not hesitate in placing the name of St. Gregory the Illuminator at the very top of a list of names of "the greatest men" in Armenian history. In the meantime no other name than Sahag's would I choose to place next to the Illuminator's name. Further, matching dream for dream, mind for mind, deed for deed, result in every area of endeavor, Sahag stands out as majestically as Ararat above all other mountain tops! And let me remark parenthetically that when I speak of Sahag I think of the soul-and-mind-unity between him and Mesrop. The power generated in these two dynamos flowed out as from a single source.

SAINT SAHAG

SAHAG was born in Caesarea in 348 and lived to the age of 90. He became Catholicos at a critical period of Armenia's history. I have already referred to 387, the tragic date for Armenia, when the country was partitioned into two political zones of influence (more correctly, of domination) by a treaty between the Persians and the Greeks. In that same year Sahag was elected Catholicos. He was quite aware of the fact that with the patriarchal throne went the crown of thorns he had to wear. To be subjected to the changing moods of one master was a strenuous enough task for any one man; Sahag was poised precariously between three masters pulling against each other, and blaming the go-between for every disappointment and failure in their dealings with one another. Sahag stepped into a situation laden with problems of life and death for the nation. In the midst of these difficulties he kept his faith and courage like a Gibraltar in a buffeting sea.

If we were to use modern terms to evaluate Sahag's education, we would simply say that he was a "university-bred man". A university today is an institution in which a large number of scholars are assembled to impart knowledge to students in diverse subjects. In ancient times just *one* man was the source of "universal knowledge". One man taught his pupils all there was to be taught. As a boy Sahag received thoroughgoing training in three different languages—Greek, Persian and Syriac—all of which he mastered, and which served him in good stead when he engaged in the exacting task of translation of the Bible into Armenian.

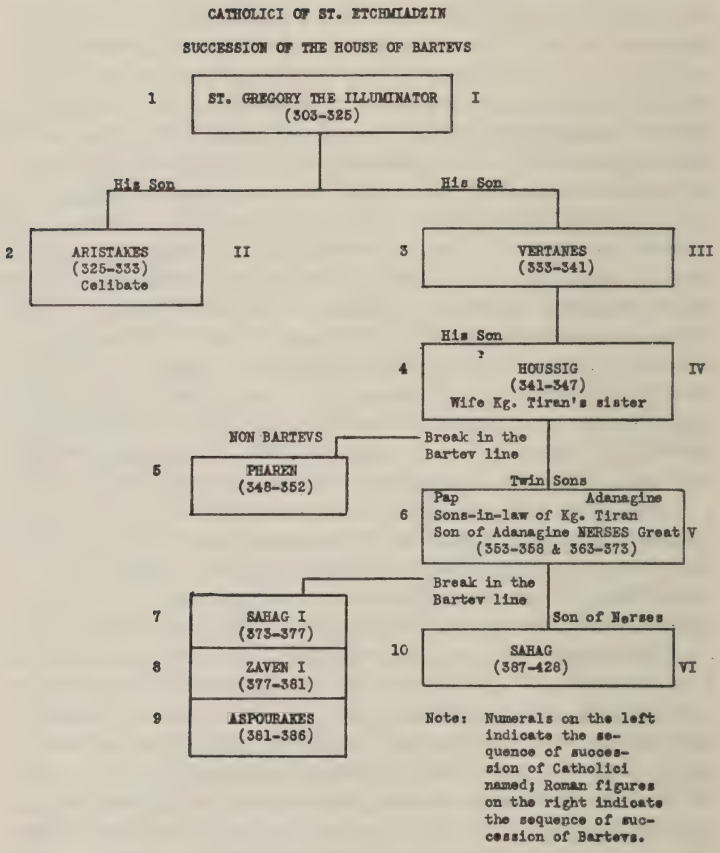
He was born into a family that had a passion for knowledge. Sahag's parents were both scholars. As newly-weds they went to school together. Nerses had among his classmates in Caesarea such men as Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, who attained great fame for their knowledge, writings, and the influence they exercised in the affairs of the Christian church. Lazare of Pharbe says that Sahag spent most of his time with Greek masters to increase his knowledge in rhetoric, music and philosophy.

We have the necessary perspective in time and space to appreciate the rare qualities of character and mind of Sahag. How about his contemporaries? Was he also admired as much by them as he is by us? Perhaps, but I have reason to doubt it. The humble and lowly loved and admired him; and those who were closely associated with him in realizing his dreams for Armenia, and shared his enthusiasm and faith. But the record of his life is comparable to the record of the Lord he loved and served. Sahag too had his full share of agonizing experiences of Gethsemane and Calvary. He suffered much by the harassments of the feudal lords whose selfish interests conflicted almost always with Sahag's dreams and plans for the general good of the nation. The young king was a "prodigal son", a pervert devoid of all sense of responsibility expected from a king. The King of Persia plotted with the Armenian Lords to depose Arsace (Arshag). Sahag fought for the maintenance of the throne regardless of the unworthiness of the incumbent. If Arsace went, the kingdom would go, for he was the last of the dynasty of Arsacids (Arshagounik) which had given Armenia a succession of rulers from 53 A.D. to Arsace IV in the days of Sahag's catholicate. Because of his stand he invited upon him the displeasure of the King of Persia and the Armenian Lords. He suffered imprisonment and exile. He, too, walked a "Via Dolorosa". But he waged a losing battle with his usual courage and faith in God. And he did lose. Vram V of Persia forced the issue. Arsace IV was deposed and thus ended ingloriously the Arsacid succession in 428.

But Sahag, the man that he was, always looking up and forward, turned defeat to triumph, the cross to a crown, and death to life.

"Like father, like son (or daughter?)" is the familiar saying. Yes, sometimes, if not always! But in the case of Sahag and his distinguished wife, popularly known by the name of "Shoushan", that saying proved to be true. They gave birth to a daughter who was a perfect image of their parents. Sahaganoush was her name. She had the "Sahag" in her and the sweetness of "Shoushan". She grew up in wisdom and grace and was in time given into marriage. Then the great event occurred. She gave birth to a boy who grew up to be the hero more ardently admired by Armenians than any other—the hero of the Battle of Avarair in 451, Vartan Mamigonian!

Sahag never died. No great man ever dies. He projected his life in all the great men of Armenia, now in Vartan, then in Vahan, and down through the ages in a multitude of men and women who have believed in his ideals, and have continued to dream his dreams for the perpetuation of the Armenian nation. He is immortal because Armenians of this generation still live.


CATHOLICI OF ST. ETCHMIADZIN
SUCCESSION OF THE HOUSE OF BARTEVS
1
ST. GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR
(303-325)
I
His Son
His Son
2
ARISTAKES
(325-333)
Celibate
II
3
VERTANES
(333-341)
III
His Son
?
4
HOUSSIG
(341-347)
Wife Kg. Tiran's sister
IV
NON BARTEVS
Break in the Bartev line
5
PHAREN
(348-352)
Twin Sons
Pap
Adanagine
6
Sons-in-law of Kg. Tiran
Son of Adanagine NERSES Great
(353-368 & 363-373)
V
Break in the Bartev line
Son of Nerses
7
SAHAG I
(373-377)
8
ZAVEN I
(377-381)
9
ASPOURAKES
(381-386)
10
SAHAG
(387-428)
VI
Note: Numerals on the left indicate the sequence of succession of Catholici named; Roman figures on the right indicate the sequence of succession of Bartevs.

THE "SENIORS" AND THE "JUNIORS"

BY NOW, I trust, we fully appreciate the fact that the "Golden Age" we have been studying in its salient aspects was the result of deliberate design, and not just an accident. It was an act of "creation" in the same sense that an architect creates a beautiful palace. In such a "creation" two factors are involved: One is the idea, or the dream, or the design in the mind; the other is the potential of personality. In simpler words, the dream must be translated into action. Plans must be executed by qualified men. Sahag and Mesrop launched a stupendous plan, the execution of which required the labor of many men for a long time. They were great men themselves, but they realized that their own greatness was not sufficient to carry out with success the task of national illumination they had planned on an ambitious scale. The greatness of these two men is characterized by the fact that they felt the urgent need of creating greatness around them. If the teacher is great, the pupil must also be great; and of course the best evidence of the greatness of the teacher is the greatness of the pupil. When we attempt to estimate the achievement of these two men we must not leave unnoticed this important fact about them. They were creatively great. There are those who are extremely jealous and self-centered. They want to dominate with their fame and distinction and they will never tolerate a rival. They must be the sun blotting out the light of other stars. Sahag and Mesrop were willing to "diminish" themselves so that others might "increase." They believed in teamwork. The task to which they had put their hands was too big for only two to accomplish; so they invited and trained others to share with them equally the responsibility and glamour of achievements of enduring significance for the life of the nation during their lifetime and for all the time to come.

* * *

Sahag and Mesrop were dreamers, scholars, organizers and administrators of the highest quality. They had a clear idea of what they were set to accomplish and with the skill of Napoleonic gen-

erals they gathered and arrayed their forces to win the victory in the battle for the physical and spiritual survival of the Armenian people. As we already mentioned in a previous section of this study, they selected a legion of students to be trained in different university centers of the time to qualify for assignments of duty on their return. We may suppose that not everyone thus selected and sent out for training met the expectations of the Masters. Unfortunately, and inevitably, some disappointed them because of one kind of failure or another. But by far the vast majority of them turned out to be brilliant scholars fully qualified to take up their assigned duties as helpers to their Masters, and eventually to replace them and carry on the work outlined by them, with the same spirit of dedication and intellectual attainment they had set as an example to follow.

* * *

And so we are led to the consideration of some of the men who constitute the second generation of so-called "Translators", who held up the torch of learning still burning brightly during the years of sustained effort.

Who were these men, and what was the value of their contribution to the cultural development of the age under consideration?

One of my frustrations in the preparation of this series of articles has been the necessity for brevity. I have never felt free to tell the story as fully as I would like to do. It is a story that, no matter at what length one might be tempted to tell it, will not bore the reader, for it is as colorful and interesting a story as any oriental legend. But the space allotted to me in which to tell this story is limited, forcing me to be abrupt in the telling and the interpretation of it.

And here again, I can offer my readers samples only out of the treasure chest of great names and personalities who have been responsible for the miracle of the survival of the Armenian people through the ages from the fifth century to the twentieth. Names will not mean anything unless we know something about them. However, perhaps some of my readers will be interested enough to read about the men whose names I will mention casually, later enlarging upon a few to some extent.

The "helpers" or shall we perhaps say the "disciples" of Sahag and Mesrop are classified under two categories: The "Seniors" and the "Juniors". In fact these represented the two generations of the "Translators", as they are generally called. The Seniors were contemporary with the Masters; and the Juniors were younger contemporaries who were also their successors. The Seniors were principally:

Hovsep, who was elevated to the Catholicate and is considered one of the heroic leaders of the religious wars against the Persians. He was personally at the Battle of Ạvarair in 451 AD.

Ghevont, who was closely associated with Catholicos Hovsep, is a name which is highly honored and venerated because of the role he played so effectively during a national crisis when the Christian faith of the Armenian people was at stake. He is a symbol of love of country and love of God. And we can say that the patriotic fervor so typical of the Armenian clergy in general, was inspired by Ghevont (or in latinized form, Leonce) Yeretz more than by anybody else.

Mooshegh of Daron and *Tirayr* of Khortzen were immediate companions of Mesrop on his missions of evangelization.

Hovsep of Baghn and *Hovhan* of Egheghetzn, both assumed positions as responsible as any in the group of translators of the Bible, including the most illustrious among them, like Eznik and Goriun. These two were engaged in the earliest attempt at the translation of the Bible along with Mesrop. They mastered the Greek language and on their return from Constantinople they brought along an authentic copy of the Bible in Greek which was of great value for comparative study of the text.

Yenovk and *Danan* were entrusted with the supervision of Alouans for whom Mesrop had devised or "invented" an alphabet to make the translation of the Bible in their language possible.

However, in the purely literary labor of the senior Translators no names besides those of the Masters stand out more prominently than the names of EZNIK and GORIUN. These two figures we shall consider in some detail as we go along.

It may sound somewhat strange, but the fact is that the Junior Translators, as a group, should be credited with more significant intellectual and creative achievement than the Senior Translators. I will mention some of the names of enduring fame in this group: *Moses* of Khoren, *David* the Invincible (Anhaght), *Catholicos Kut, Hovhan Mantagoony, Yeghishe* (Elisaeus), *Lazar* of Pharbe. These are familiar names to even those who have a smattering of knowledge of Armenian classical literature. When we speak of the *perfection* of classical Armenian, we associate it with the literature these men produced. Not enough time elapsed between the translation of the Bible, which set the standard of linguistic and literary perfection, to allow linguistic abuse or deterioration that is noticeable in the late sixth and seventh centuries. They received their nurture in an atmosphere saturated with the life-breath and light of the Masters. They were not carried away with a craze for novelty.

Their reverence for the established standards of literary style and form was too deep to permit them to treat them light-heartedly. And then, also, they had a defensive state of mind. They were constantly on guard against influences which threatened to adulterate their language, their beliefs, their cultural heritage. They felt strongly that, to survive at all, they had to live securely behind spiritual and cultural ramparts. It was not time for change; it was time to maintain faithfully that which was handed to them by the Masters and a generation of immediate disciples whose memory lived in their hearts and guided their thinking and action.

We are not discussing just "literature". We are concerned with life that creates literature. And this life took form in personalities—in their thinking, in their ideals, in their aspirations. Nothing is understood properly—literature or history—except in terms of life in living men and women.

"UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA"

THERE IS a significant detail in the panorama of the "Golden Age" I have so far sketched, to which I must invite the attention of my readers to alert them against a misconception common to most casual students of the period.

I have already stated that the comprehensive plan for the religious and cultural enlightenment of the Armenian people, conceived and successfully executed by the Saints Sahag and Mesrop, was largely due to the help of a qualified and dedicated group of students they had selected and trained. But let us now ask: Who trained them?

It is generally believed that these students were sent to "university centers" abroad, such as Edessa, Antioch, Athens, Alexandria and Constantinople, where they received their training for the specific tasks to be assigned to each on their return home. That is perfectly true. But one is prompted to ask if they were raw young men without any preliminary schooling at home. Just the contrary is true. They were, using a modern term, "college graduates", and they were sent abroad for "advanced studies" or "graduate studies", particularly in a specialized field of knowledge.

Every single student who was selected for special training was thoroughly "processed"—his intellectual capacities were tested, his I.Q. taken, his spiritual qualifications examined, and his eagerness for dedicated service ascertained before he was admitted as a student at the "University of Armenia". I must assume personal responsibility for naming the school Sahag and Mesrop founded a "university". And why?

What is a "university"? The definition the dictionary gives is simply "an institution where superior instruction is given to students". But in the Medieval Age the "university" was a "community of masters and scholars" (universitas magistorum et scholarum) or a place where one could receive instruction in one or more branches of knowledge ("studium" or "studium generale").

However, "universities" in ancient times differed from those of

later and modern times in a distinctive detail: in ancient times one single person, famed for his vast knowledge, constituted the "university" by and in himself; whereas what constitutes the "university" in its current sense is a community of many scholars, each with his own specialty, called "faculty", and students who are instructed by several members of the "faculty" at one time. In other words, while in ancient times the term "universitas" was used in reference to the "universality" or comprehensive extent of *the man* who taught his students, in modern times it is used to define the *variety of subjects* and the *faculty* who teach them.

From ancient times down to the period of "Scholasticism", the "university", with whatever locale it was associated, was the single man who taught—a rhetorician perhaps, or a theologian, or a philosopher, as the case might be. In the "classical" period of Greece, for instance, there was no "University of Athens" in the sense that there is now; but there was then a Socrates who was himself a "university" in the field of moral philosophy, let us say. Also, there was a Plato, a pupil and successor of Socrates, who was a "university"; and Aristotle and others.

As late as the eleventh century the universities of Europe were usually *individual* teachers who possessed "universal knowledge". Just to mention a few names at random: Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard of Paris, Peter of Lombard of Novara in Lombardy, Albertus Magnus, called "Universal Doctor", a title given him for the vastness of knowledge he possessed, Thomas Aquinas, and his disciple and interpreter, John Duns Scotus. These men were each a "university" in and by himself. They knew all there was to be known, and they had the mind to build up by processes of logic or philosophical speculation. They were theologians in the strict sense of the term as then used and understood, because "theology" was then the "universal science". In other words, God underlay all knowledge. So that the basic principle governing the thinking of a "schoolman" was, as a church historian defines it, that "faith precedes knowledge; fixes boundaries of knowledge, and prescribes its relations".

When, therefore, reference is made to "university centers" where Armenian students were sent to receive special instruction, it should be understood to mean instruction at the feet of one individual teacher of universal fame.

Now, the point I want to bring out is the fact that these students were, in our parlance, "graduate students". If so, then, the question suggests itself as to where they did their "undergraduate" work.

Supported by all the verifiable historical facts available I do not hesitate to state that they did it at the "University of Armenia". And a fine "university" it was indeed, presided over by two of the most distinguished scholars of the time, Saints Sahag and Mesrop. I have already mentioned the names of some of their students, or "graduates". I for one would gladly give up all my university degrees for the one and only academic distinction of being a graduate from the "University of Armenia" as it was in the fifth century of our era. The graduates from that "university" were fully matured intellectually, and enriched spiritually, and compared with "graduates" of a modern college or university, superior in many respects. I am at least sure that they could make much better use of their minds—they could think more profoundly—whatever their deficiency in the field of "pure sciences" might be, than most of the so-called "college-bred" individuals in a modern society anywhere.

If we have any historic justification for speaking of "universities" of, say, Edessa, Alexandria, Constantinople, Athens, we have equal justification for speaking of the "Sahag-Mesropian School" as the "University of Armenia".

* * *

If this name is accepted and the fact granted, we can declare to the world that there rose with the dawning of the national culture of Armenians a "University" of such distinction as to reflect honor upon the country and people. The present-day University of Erivan can trace its historic beginnings to the fifth century A.D.

The oldest university in Europe is that of Salerno (Italy), founded in the 9th century. But the beginnings of most of the European universities do not go further back than the 12th century. Thus, the universities of Bologna, Paris, Padua, Oxford, Cambridge were founded sometime or other during the 12th century; the University of Cologne (Germany), in the 14th century; the universities of Leipzig, in the 15th century; Upsala, Glasgow, Tubingen, Jena, in the 16th century; Moscow, in the 18th; Dorpat, in the 19th.

I may seem to have deviated from my immediate subject, but actually I have not because I am interested in demonstrating historical facts and values in "perspective". To be able to appreciate facts and to measure "values" we must translate them all into terms we easily understand. My approach to the intellectual and spiritual Ararat of Armenian national life has been, as my readers now fully realize, from a point that gives us the advantage of having a full view of the glory of that life. The "Golden Age" is the epitome of the entire history of the Armenian nation. It is the key to the

mystery of its survival through the centuries past down to the present. It is the source from which its life stream has flown without any break.

* * *

The "University of Armenia" was more like a modern university than most of the other "universities" in the fifth century. It had a "faculty" of men fully equipped for the several tasks assigned to its members. Some of them were assigned to teaching; others, to the department of translations; others, to creative literary labor; still others, to administrative duties; but the choicest intellects were assigned to the study and production of philosophical and apologetic treatises.

My readers are already familiar with some of the "Senior" and "Junior" translators. A select number of these translators were attached to the Masters and constituted, under their leadership, the "faculty" of the "University of Armenia" which I have roughly pictured. Of this "faculty" Eznik (of Goghp) was the highest ranking member; if not by "appointment", then by the sheer merit of his attainments, he was the "dean".

Among the entire "fellowship" of translators, he had the keenest mind. He had had every advantage of advanced studies abroad. He had natural aptitude for learning languages. He had mastered, besides Armenian and Persian, Syriac and Greek. He learned Syriac at its source, in Edessa. And he mastered Greek in Constantinople. After years of study in Constantinople he returned home bringing with him certificates of high honors and commendation for his accomplishments from his distinguished teachers and the Patriarch himself.

Eznik was ordained a Bishop. And, as one of the dignitaries of the Armenian Church, he participated at that fateful "Council of Bishops" which Catholicos Hovsep had called to consider and discuss the infamous letter of the King of Persia, Yesderd II, which Elisaeus (Yeghishe) gives verbatim in his epic history of the wars waged by Armenians against the Persians under the leadership of Vartan, in defense of their Christian faith and freedom of conscience.

Eznik's return from Constantinople was most welcome to the Masters because he was needed for his thorough knowledge of Greek and his erudition. Moreover, he brought back with him an authentic Greek text of the Bible, an examination of which revealed at once mistakes which had slipped into the Armenian translation, and therefore made a revision of it imperative. By that time Sahag

and Mesrop were old and weary, and all their spare time and energy were preempted by a multiplicity of duties and responsibilities of administration and direction of the vast program of national enlightenment. Hence, they drafted Eznik for the major responsibility of the exacting task of the revision or, as some prefer to call it, "second translation" of the Bible. Eznik proved himself equal to the difficult task to which he was assigned.

Eznik's name stands out conspicuously in the history of the "Golden Age" also as the author of a famous book under the intriguing title of "Refutation of Sects".

What is it about and under what exigencies was it written and published? I will deal with these questions next.

EZNIK, THE THEOLOGIAN & PHILOSOPHER

THE MIND OF our "dean" was like a diamond with the light of knowledge flashing from its facets in "bluish brilliance". None of the minds in the "faculty" I spoke of equalled his. He was keen, clear and thorough in his thinking. He had no patience with half-baked ideas. His approach to every subject he handled was typically scholarly. That was the make-up of his mind. He was a religious philosopher par excellence, and the equal of others among his contemporaries, who had gained greater fame because of their advantageous position in the hierarchy of the Graeco-Roman Church.

Eznik's mind came closest to the Greek mind among his fellow scholars. Using a modern term, I would say he was the representative of "western thought and outlook".

Further, he was a profound linguist. His knowledge of Greek was not equalled by any of the "Translators", including, I dare say, his great Masters. That is the fact; and if it is not, somebody must refute it with acceptable arguments against what I believe to be the fact. As I already mentioned, he was the principal reviser of the "first translation" of the Bible into Armenian. He would not have been entrusted with that difficult task if the Masters did not recognize the superiority of his linguistic knowledge, and his scholarly competence for his assignment. He understood clearly what he was translating. The translation of a book like the Bible demanded not only linguistic knowledge but also theological knowledge. And Eznik could fulfill these demands amply. He was by choice and training, and natural aptitude, a theologian. What he was assigned to do he accomplished with brilliant success because he was a Greek scholar and a theologian at the same time. By the same token, a historical book must be translated by a historian; a philosophical book, by a philosopher; a theological book, by a theologian. Otherwise the translation will be a literal translation with the deeper meaning of the text hidden behind "words" completely lost. This is an incidental remark regarding the question as to why the Armenian translation of the Bible has been successful to an unusual degree.

As in nature, so also in the realm of ideas you do not always reap what you sow. Indeed, there is a natural law operative in the spiritual world. Ideas, too, have their battles to wage, and if they must endure, they must survive the sharp conflicts with hostile ideas they encounter. Christian ideas and beliefs did not just grow naturally and unhampered. They grew under the watchful eyes of Christian teachers who could and would defend them against abuse, and maintain their original integrity and power. This was the sacred task of the Christian Apologists in the earliest stages of the development of the Christian Church in the Roman Empire. So also in Armenia.

Armenia was beset by hostile forces particularly during the period under our consideration, not only menacing its political life, as we saw, but also its spiritual life. It was not enough that the nation had adopted Christianity as its religion; she had to remain Christian. However strong the castle of truth, it needed its watchmen and defenders. And the keenest theological mind of the time was entrusted with the responsible task of watching and defending the purity of the faith which was given this nation by the hand of its first Evangel, St. Gregory.

What were the dangers against which Eznik decided to draw his sword to defend the Church and its basic doctrines? If I can answer this question adequately within the limits of a single page I will feel that I have succeeded in some measure in having my readers appreciate the significance of Eznik's contribution to the *spiritual* survival of the Armenian people during a period of crisis.

* * *

Throughout the history of the Christian Church sects and heresies have grown as weeds grow in a lawn. Sects and sectarians exist (and some thrive) now as they did in almost every century, just as they did before and during the fifth century. The nature and impact of these sects differed from one century to another, but they had all to be met. The Church and its Apologists were on their toes constantly because of the presence and agitation of sectarian propagandists now here, now there, and usually, everywhere. As noted before, Armenia was not isolated from the rest of the Christian world, and was as exposed to these dangers as other peoples were.

So Eznik met these sectarian ideas head on with such brilliant arguments in refutation of them that his book became a classic among Christian Apologetics, not only nationally but also internationally. He named his book "The Refutation of Sects". The name describes the intent and content of the book most appropriately.

Eznik's implied definition of "sect" is any kind of religious or philosophical idea that is foreign to the Gospel and the Christian faith. For instance, he aims his sharp arrows against the degenerating teachings of Mazdaeism of the Sassanian Persians under whose political domination Armenians then lived. Eznik felt strongly that his people needed spiritual defense against the incursions of Mazdaeism as much as defense by brute force. As we all know, the Persians made their first attempt of invasion and domination of Armenia through the propaganda of ideas. They did not send an army to overcome resistance, as they did in desperation at a later date; but they sent magi to instruct the people in their religion. I cannot go into the arguments Eznik uses refuting the entire system of thought constructed by the earthly musings of the "Parsee" mind.

* * *

In broad outline: The Zoroastrian God gave birth to twin sons —Ormuzd and Ahriman—the first, the author and giver of all good things, and the other, of evil things. The Manichaean and the Zoroastrian belief in this doctrine was identical, and yet Persians hated and persecuted the Manichaeans mercilessly. Why this inconsistency, presses Eznik? Then again, how does it happen that their God, if good in nature, can give birth to that which is evil? Can the same tree bear good fruit and bad fruit at the same time? And if truly such a God can be the father of both good and evil, he himself cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be good. Ahriman is a source of evil, although capable of good, for he created light, and light is good. Hence, the evil is not because of his *nature* but because of his *will;* that is, he chose to be evil. And Eznik goes on examining every tenet of their religion and one by one smashes them all with an array of irrefutable arguments.

Modern astrology has its roots in Zoroastrianism. It is pagan through and through and there is neither Christian nor scientific basis to it. It feeds on human credulity and superstition. If one is interested in finding some sound arguments against that nonsense he should turn to some of the pages of Eznik's book. Astrology is based on a belief in the determinism of fate, a vulgarization of the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination. But it is not Fate that is in control of human life, but a wise and loving God. And so on and so forth.

As I indicated before: as a "bishop" Eznik participated in the Conclave of Bishops held at Ashtishat. The main business of this meeting under the presidency of the brave Catholicos of the time, Hovsep, was to formulate the argumentative answer to the letter Yesdegerd II had addressed to them urging them to accept Mazdaeism for their religion. Who formulated the answer, the text of

which is preserved for us in the history of Armenia's religious wars written by Yeghishe? So far as I know, there is no record of the name of an individual, or names of a committee, assigned the task of formulating the letter, and submitting it to the assembly of bishops for discussion or adoption. But I would venture the opinion that if it was a single man who drafted that letter, the most likely person to have done it would be Eznik. Or, if it was done by a committee consisting of a few bishops, it is more likely than not that Eznik was its chairman, and possibly, in his capacity as chairman, composer of the first draft of that letter. In the light of Eznik's book which we are discussing, such a conjecture cannot be far from the truth. One who is familiar with the book will at once see reflections of some of his thoughts and arguments in the tone and content of the letter referred to.

* * *

Of the four sections of the book the other three are devoted to the consideration of "Pagans" in general, then of secular "Philosophers" and finally of "Marcionites".

I have no desire to review fully each of these sections because that is beyond the scope of my interest and plan in these pages. And even if I were tempted to expand my review beyond the limit I have set for the treatment of the subject, it would be imposing upon the patience of my readers. I am fully aware of the fact that I am addressing myself to "lay" readers, so to speak, who know little, if anything, about the subject; and also, that they are mostly young readers who seek and will accept only light fare for reading. However, to give the barest outline of the content of this classic, I must introduce in a few sentences the subject matter of the book under separate sections or chapters I mentioned above.

Take the chapter on "Philosophers" and their philosophies—what does he have to say about them? My personal interest in this chapter lies in the fact that it bears evidence of Eznik's profound knowledge of Greek philosophy. Theologians are philosophers in a restricted field anyway. And all one has to do is to expand his interest into a broader field of human thought. That Eznik did because he found himself in an atmosphere in Constantinople conducive to the development of such interest. And then he could naturally bridge Christian thought with philosophical thought in the consideration of "first causes" or sources of "beginning of things". How did things come about as they did? That constituted the subject of deepest interest for the Greek philosophers. What is the principle of life? Eznik went over the arguments of Pythagoras and the Platonists and tried to set the spiritual interpretation of creation over against

its materialistic interpretation. For Pythagoras mortality or immortality was a matter of "levels" in space. He held everything above the moon immortal, and everything below it mortal. What a ridiculous statement for us, who have the advantage of modern enlightenment, but some twenty centuries ago or more the human mind was still immature and struggling with the enigma of life and creation. He takes to task the Stoics and the Epicureans—the former, realists of their day, and the latter, the pragmatists. He attacks mercilessly the Epicurean ideal of pursuit of pleasure and happiness as the *summum bonum* of life. What would he have to say of the Neo-Epicureanism of our day, I wonder? From a Christian point of view, his argument would still hold today, I believe.

Then again he protests the identification of God with Nature. God is a Creator but not the Creation. He flatly refutes the polytheism so common then, and not so uncommon in many quarters today. He attempts to reconcile physical phenomena with theological views of the universe. And so forth. In our own thinking, we would not accept all his views or arguments, naturally. But that is not the point. The point is that he was a philosopher and thought and argued as the Christian Apologists of his time would. What is impressive in his thinking is the keenness of his mind and the vast erudition of natural sciences and philosophical thought he possessed.

* * *

The chapter on "Pagans" runs along the line of thought I indicated in his discussion of Mazdaen religion. He struggles with the eternal problem of evil and suffering: Wherein and wherefore evil exercises its control over human life? Where is the seat of evil? What is the place and function of God? How to deal with evil? Does evil serve any good end? How to classify death? What is the moral basis of chastisement? These and other similar questions are taken up and discussed from the point of view on one hand, of the pagan, and on the other, of the Christian Apologist.

And what about the "Marcionites" which are discussed in the fourth section of Eznik's book?

Marcion is one of the interesting characters in the history of the Christian church, if not as significant as some others whose names are more familiar to us. He lived in the second century and spent his earlier years in Sinope, a port on the Black Sea, where he was born, and where he got rich as a shipowner. His religious interest led him to the study of the Bible. Out of that study was born the sectarian reformer of the Christian church. He found flagrant inconsistencies in the character of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. In the New Testament he found Christ as the

revelation of a God of love. On the contrary, in the Old Testament he found a God who was jealous, wrathful, vindictive, and chastising. In one, God was a stern administrator of justice; in the other, the embodiment of mercy and forgiveness. He further saw that some of the books in the New Testament were corrupted, so he began to expurgate them by cutting out whatever was tainted by Judaistic theology. He thus was left but a small portion of the New Testament as the "pure gospel" and on it he established his own community or "church" in Rome where he lived all his life after he had left Sinope and his business for good. He accepted Paul as the only genuine interpreter of the gospel of Christ and his salvation and rejected the others.

Ideas have wings and fly to distant places and, like seeds carried by the wind, take root and grow wherever they find fertile soil. And so Marcion's idea spread and "churches" were established in Asia Minor and elsewhere, as far as the confines of Armenia.

The Marcionite ideas for a while became a serious threat to the established churches whose doctrinal basis was the decrees of the Councils. In Marcionism there was a strong element of truth which, however, was considered and applied out of its context and relative value. It was an early movement of reformation based on the critical study of the Bible. Out of such study there rose another movement of Reformation in the 16th century which marks the beginning of what today is called the "Protestant Church". But the latter movement was the result of a more constructive and comprehensive study of the Bible in combination with many other external causes.

This is in a nutshell the Marcionite "heresy". It has diverse ramifications of thought into which I cannot go. But Eznik goes into them in detail and points out their errors. He sits hard upon the materialism of Marcion's views. The controversial problem of the "God of Law" and "God of Love" is thoroughly discussed and argued. And along with theologically important questions matters of minor importance are also taken up, for it is peculiar to any kind of sectarianism to exaggerate insignificant matters, such as habits of eating, for instance, and raise them to the level of vital issues in religion.

It can now be appreciated even with a cursory presentation of the content of this significant book, through what maze of theological and philosophical thinking Eznik has to wind his way to attain his objective, the defense of the orthodoxy and integrity of the Armenian Church. Levon Arpee is right when he states "that it was not on the field of battle, but in the field of thought that Armenia's great victory for Christianity was won".

DEDICATION UNLIMITED

WE HAVE, I believe, gone far enough in our study of the Golden Age to have the necessary perspective for appreciating the magnitude of the contribution to the creation and development of Armenian Culture St. Sahag and St. Mesrop made with a distinguished group of scholars helping them. We have seen that without the genius and vision of these two men, endowed with powers of spirit and intellect to such an unusual degree, no Golden Age would have ever dawned over Armenia; and, by the same token, without a Golden Age Armenia would have sunk into oblivion and faded out of history. My readers have, by now, realized, I am sure, that the ultimate object of the study of the period I have tried to present is to prove that significant fact.

It must, however, be noted that the glorious structure of the Golden Age rests—if I may use a geometrical figure—on a "triangle" and not on two "parallel lines". I have already said enough—enough for our purpose—about Sts. Sahag and Mesrop, representing two sides of the "triangle" but hardly anything about the third side of it. That I propose to do in the next few paragraphs.

The third side of the "triangle" is Vramshapouh, the king of Armenia, contemporaneous with the Saints and the major portion of their work.

* * *

Vramshapouh ruled over Armenia when, politically, thrones were insecure. One evidence of this is, for instance, the fact that during a period of less than a century and a half, from the reign of the first Christian king, Dirtad III of the Arsacid Dynasty, or, 287 A.D., to the last, Artashes IV, with whom Armenian independence ended in 428, fifteen kings reigned over Armenia, most of them raised or deposed at will by either the Persian kings or by the Emperors in Constantinople who were implacable rivals of each other and pursued identical policies of domination over Armenia.

A quick glance over the chart below will make the picture clear.

Starting with Dirtad III (287-336) and coming down the line to Pap (367-374)

Arshak III	(383-386)	Valarshak	(d. 384)
Khosrov IV	(383-391)	Vramshapouh	(391-414)
		Khosrov IV	(414-415)
Tigran VII	(415-417)	Arshak IV	(415-416)
		Artashes IV	(422-428)

Armenia was helplessly sandwiched between the bloody rivalries of the East and the West during this period (and for that matter during its entire history) and gradually squeezed out of her independence in the year 428 A.D. as noted above. With the downfall of the Arsacid (Arshagouni) dynasty the independence of Armenia came to an inglorious end. The last dissolute king of Armenia, Artashes IV, was replaced by a prince of the Persian royalty, the son of the ruling king of the time, Yesdegert.

While Arshak III reigned over Armenia the Persians set a rival king over the eastern portion of the land so as to counterbalance the influence of the West to which they had good reason to suspect Arshak was subjected. Khosrov IV, the choice and appointee of the Persian king, Shapouh III, thus became, in spite of himself, Arshak's rival. But rivalries do not stop with individual personalities. They involve others who constitute the entourage of rival kings. What then actually happened was a disruption of the solidarity of the entire nation. Indeed, the quickest and surest way to lead a nation to its ruin is to create and encourage internal conflicts and rivalries for power.

This act of the Persians might very well be a good casus belli for the West but the Roman Emperor, Theodosius, had enough worries of his own and was reluctant to plunge into a war with the Persians and agreed to a peaceful settlement of the dispute, and naturally, at the expense of Armenia. As we have already seen they agreed to divide Armenia into two zones of influence, placing the eastern zone under the political domination of the Persian kings and the western zone under the control of the Emperors in Constantinople. Doesn't this sound modern? Evidently this is the habitual method of great powers in all ages in dealing with little nations. But as in all similar cases, in this particular case also, this was a short-sighted settlement that actually left the situation exactly where it was before, as explosive as ever.

What, then, happened?

Arshak and Khosrov soon got at each other's throat. The nobility who had sided with Arshak and supported him, owned extensive lands in the eastern section of the country over which Khosrov now ruled. Hence, to force the nobility to return home and desert Arshak to his fate, Khosrov threatened to confiscate the properties they owned and thus to pauperize them. The story is sad and written in shame and humiliation. Poor Arshak, thus caught between the devil and the sea, died sick at heart and completely broken in body.

Being childless, Arshak's throne was for a while left unoccupied. Khosrov took advantage of this crisis and made an attempt to reunite Armenia under his reign. To succeed in his design, he appealed to Constantinople and secured the assent of the Emperor for his design. However, he roused the ire of his Persian master, Vram IV, by appointing Sahag to the Catholicate, without consulting Vram and having his approval. Khosrov was fully aware that Sahag was a persona non grata with the Persian court because of his love for Greek culture and enthusiasm for western ideas. Vram came back at Khosrov with a staggering blow. He deposed and imprisoned both him and the Catholicos. And he elevated Vramshapouh, Khosrov's brother, to kingship over Armenia.

Vramshapouh was a name given the Armenian king to constantly remind him that he owed his throne to the good will of the king of Persia and that he could maintain it only at the price of loyalty to Vram. Vramshapouh was the puppet of "Vram" and his father "Shapouh", therefore pledged to be oriented to the East in all his acts and policies.

* * *

Vramshapouh was a man of mild manners, high ideals, and passionately given to cultural interests. Although he was king not by his own choice or seeking, he decided to make the best of his royal prerogatives to serve the urgent needs of his country. Fortunately he was not a haughty and self-centered man. He was amenable to guidance by a man of great wisdom, the Catholicos Sahag, who was comparable with the great prophets of old, such as Jeremiah and Isaiah, with a vision for the salvation of his people politically and spiritually.

Vramshapouh devoted his energies to the establishment of peace within and without the country. He championed the spirit of neighborliness and good-will as a national foreign policy. He restored a spirit of harmony and accord between the heads of the nobility. He interceded with the Persian king for the release of his brother and the Catholicos from prison. And when they were released he

made the deposed king, Khosrov, his personal honored guest at the royal palace, and he reinstated Sahag in his exalted position as Catholicos. He ruled wisely and fruitfully for twenty-one years. And no other individual shares with the Saints more rightfully than Vramshapouh the credit for the achievements in the realm of Culture, which we have been reviewing with a deep sense of admiration and gratitude.

* * *

I have asked myself frequently if there would be a Golden Age without a Vramshapouh. If the question were: Could there be a Golden Age without St. Sahag and St. Mesrop? my answer would unhesitatingly be, "No". I have deliberated on the first question at some length and, in the light of history, I have come to the conclusion that the age under our consideration would not be "golden" but at best "silver," if even that without a Vramshapouh. And how could it be otherwise? The program of national enlightenment, so carefully drafted by the Masters, needed financial backing for effective execution. Many wonderful plans have often come to nought because of lack of financial support. Sahag and Mesrop were both poor monks themselves and without any financial resources necessary to carry out a program designed to make of uncultured pagans a cultured Christian nation. They needed a legion of helpers. Where and how were they to train them? They selected promising young men to send to the four corners of the known world of the time to acquire knowledge and master the languages in which great books had been written. They needed money for these students. Then they needed money for the schools they wanted to open in all parts of the country to teach an illiterate people how to read and write in the language they spoke, and thus make the knowledge of the Gospel accessible to them. This was, in a broad sense, a "home missionary work" and it could not be done without money.

Fortunately the reigning king then was not a Dertad or a Tiran or an Arshak, but a Vramshapouh, whom God Himself had called for a great mission to his people. He was qualified temperamentally, spiritually, intellectually to join hands with the Masters to make the successful execution of their program possible. Vramshapouh became the tower of strength behind the Masters. Their need and their desire was made into law. King Vramshapouh underwrote all the expenses necessary for schools and students. Every extant contemporary record unanimously praises the generous support by the king of the entire program launched by the Masters. The records state that Vramshapouh placed the resources of the royal treasury

at the disposal of Sahag and Mesrop, whom he admired, honored and trusted.

Wonderful things happen when the dreamer and the man of means get together. If Providence had not brought these three men together the history of Armenia would be entirely different in the fifth and ensuing centuries if perchance there were a continuing history.

The united endeavor of these three men resulted in no less an achievement than the survival of a nation through many centuries to this very day.

King Vramshapouh spent his financial resources lavishly not to add glory to his name but to glorify the people he loved and served with self-effacement and dedication. He was more interested in the growing greatness of his people than in himself. The evidence of his greatness is his humility. He did what he could, for all he did he felt it was his duty to do. This is a rare virtue. Most people who do good demand recognition for what they do. Often people give not for love of the cause, but for love of praise and glamor.

I started saying that the structural foundations of the Golden Age rest on a "triangle" of personalities. Changing the phrase somewhat, I could say that the Golden Age was the result of "team work" or "trinity" of which the two were the engine and the other the oil.

* * *

My readers are by now fully aware that the little bit of historian in me is complemented by the theologian. I find it impossible to resist my natural inclination to interpret history in terms of intangible spiritual forces continuously active in life. Otherwise, how can you answer such questions as these: Why was there a Mesrop born at the time and place where a Sahag was born? Why were these men, burning with the same passion for the spiritual rebirth of a nation, thrown together in the same age? Why did they not live in different countries and removed from each other in space and time? Why should a king of Vramshapouh's character and qualities rule over Armenia at the time he did? And so forth and so on. Why, and endlessly why?

Whatever the historian's answer may be, if he has one, the theologian's answer, such as I would offer is this: God orders life mysteriously. What we see happening in history are but manifestations of the mysterious orderings of God. The history of the Golden Age is then written by the golden pen of God.

A HERO WORSHIPPER

The most gorgeous flower bed in the "little garden" ("adzoo" as some one has described it rather apologetically) is the period in which the great figures of the Golden Age appeared and flourished. And somehow I cannot get away from that "adzoo". I am in love with it. I appreciate its glory by every possible standard of judgment I am able to use. What really happened during a period of less than a full century is unique in all its aspects, and never anything like it has recurred in the life of Armenians during the ensuing centuries up to the present day. Once we stepped out of that period of a cultural "paradise" we never again reentered it. And why not? The answer is the History of Armenia itself. Read it and you will find out why. There is an interdependence between history and culture in its comprehensive sense. Why, for instance, literature flourished in a certain period, and declined in another. Social, economic, and political forces shape ideas, and ideas find expression in literature. Hence, the flowering or fading of literature is determined by external forces influencing the human spirit either favorably or adversely.

What we find in our study of Armenian literature we also find in the literature of other nations, both ancient and modern. For instance, the mid-nineteenth century of American literature, when so many of the American poets and essayists created a literature of enduring value, is called the "Golden Age" of American Literature. The ancient Greeks had their Golden Age which extended over close to two centuries, roughly, from 475 to 300 B.C., during which period there appeared great tragedians like Sophocles and Euripides, and Aristophanes the comedian; also the historians Herotodus, Thucydites, Xenophon; philosophers like Plato, Socrates. The Golden Age in this history of any nation comes but once. Greece has had but one Golden Age. The "how" and the "why" can only be searched and found, as I suggested, in the entire history of a nation.

A historian attempts to explain in the following words the rise of the Golden Age in Greece: "The Golden Age of Greek literature

followed the Persian Wars, and was, in a large measure, produced by them. Every literary outburst is the result of a profound stirring of the depths of national life. All Hellas had been profoundly moved by the tremendous struggle for political existence." Activity and response make an age uniquely creative in every area of human thought. And the Golden Age is usually an outgrowth of activity and response.

Similar causes under given conditions bring about similar results in the life of all nations. If we study the period in Armenian history preceding and following the Golden Age, we shall be able to answer some of the questions I have raised.

* * *

I am in the midst of introducing some of the conspicuous figures of the Golden Age. I must naturally asume the entire responsibility of selection of these particular figures in preference to others which someone else might select by standards of his own.

So, I now present to you Goriun who is one of the class of "Senior" translators, a personal friend and fellow student of Eznik. He was, like the rest of the group, thoroughly trained for the triple task of writing, translating, and preaching. The scholars of the Golden Age were, unlike the scholars of later ages, at the service of the Church and Culture, which were inseparably linked together. It was the Church that, as we saw, initiated and championed Culture, or spiritual and intellectual enlightenment. And this identity of all cultural values with the Church has endured through many centuries up to the present time.

We shall meet the enigma of what caused what, if we try to determine the question of whether the Church sustained the Culture it created, or, once created, Culture sustained the Church.

But we have already argued the point that the Armenian Church could at best cherish only a forlorn hope of surviving as long as it has, had it not been for the revitalizing power of Culture the Church was instrumental in creating. And by the same token, and paradoxically, the strength of the Armenian Church lies not in its adaptability to change but to its stout stand on its profound convictions, practices, and its obstinate determination to maintain the pattern of National Culture. And it is the verdict of history that no other institution of whatever nature has been more consistently successful in maintaining Armenian Culture than the Armenian Church. "Modernize" the Church, as some thoughtless people clamor? No, never! If you do, you distort it, weaken it, drain its power, shroud its glory. *Spiritualize it,* yes! But do not change it from what it has been for sixteen centuries, a power-house for the

maintenance of the integrity of National Life and Culture of Armenians. The Armenian Church lacks nothing, and has everything. All that the Church ever needs is *to use* what it has in full force, to do today what it did in the fifth century. If there is any trace of failure anywhere, and anytime, the responsibility lies with individual Armenians and not with the Church. Instead of trying to bury the Church in our "modernity," let us get back *ourselves* to the blessed tradition of the fifth century and reflect in our hearts the strength and beauty of the faith and culture embodied in the Church which the great figures of the Golden Age served with an unparalleled dedication.

Not all students found the Masters still living on their return from abroad. But Goriun was one of the fortunate ones, like Eznik, to be able to collaborate with them for some time and discharge assigned tasks under their supervision. He was ordained bishop by the hand of St. Sahag, the Catholicos, and sent out to Georgia, of which he was a native, as a missionary, to instruct the people of that land in the Christian faith and to enlighten their minds with the eternal truths of the Gospel. He eventually died in that post after years of fruitful labor.

Evidently Goriun and his beloved Master were closely attached to each other. Otherwise, why should the fellowship of translators agree on their choice of Goriun to be the official biographer of St. Mesrop? There is evidence to prove that Goriun did not come out himself with the proposition of producing a biography of the Master; on the contrary the evidence points to the fact that the proposition was put up to him by his friends and fellow-students. He realized the seriousness of the task and was hesitant to assume the responsibility of it, but the pressure of the appeal was too insistent for him to withstand, so he yielded.

The book of which the authorship is not contested at all is The Life of Mashtotz (Mashtotz being a variable of Mesrop). He is the first formal biographer in Armenian Literature. Without this biographical book we would be left ignorant of a great many details in the personal life of St. Mesrop. However, it should be noted that before a single sentence was written by anyone on the life of St. Mesrop, he was himself writing the record of his life with his *glorious work*. After all, what a man achieves is the sum total of his life. In other words, we would rather know a man by the testimony of *his accomplishments* than by the testimony of a biographer. I do not mean to underrate the value of Goriun's biography of St. Mesrop; but I want to emphasize the fact that greatness was already there, before Goriun bore testimony to it. Gold is gold whether or not someone declares it to be gold.

Only this one book has come down to us under the authorship of Goriun. Some serious scholars have upheld the view that Goriun was the author of other books, some of which have, for some reason or other, appeared under the names of others. I cannot enter into these critical problems here as they are beyond the pale of interest of this serial. I want to mention only the fact that some scholars claim that Goriun is also the biographer of St. Gregory the Illuminator and his teaching, which, however, has come down to us under the authorship of Agathangelos, a Roman (who may or may not have written in Armenian), who is supposed to have been commissioned by King Dirtad III (287-336) (Tiridates, as the Greeks have it) to write in detail the acts of the great Evangelizer of Armenians. There are a number of critical scholars who would ascribe to Goriun the authorship also of a history that might be considered a sequel to Agathangelos' book which bears the name of Byzant of Faustus, most likely of Greek origin. This volume gives the history of a short period of some twenty-nine years, covering the reign of Khosrov III (337-342), the son of Dirtad, and his immediate successors. The book is usually entitled "Byzantarium" (*Puzantaran,* in Armenian).

Besides these claimed authorships, some Armenian and European scholars are inclined to believe that Goriun had his definite share in translations about which, however, he is silent, and historians, like Lazar of Pharbe, do not mention his name among those of other translators.

* * *

Leaving these controversial questions to qualified scholars to decide, let us hail Goriun as the author of the biography of the Greatest Armenian in the annals of this little nation. I have already stated once, and I want to repeat here again that St. Mesrop has no match for his superlative spiritual and intellectual powers and the enduring value of his achievements among all the great Armenians we could list from the fifth century down to our own days. (I would, by personal choice, let St. Gregory the Illuminator stand at the very top of such a list.)

The text of the book is rather difficult to read and understand. His style cannot stand comparison with Eznik's, for instance. The best students of classical Armenian stumble on a good many passages in the book. Whether these "hard nuts" were placed in the text by copyists, who could not themselves make sense of the original text and garbled it with meaningless words, or whatever the reason may be, the fact is Goriun cannot be read as easily as Elisaeus (Yeghishé) for instance.

* * *

Goriun distinguished himself by the subject of his book. Had he

selected a subject of lesser consequence, with the language he used, he would not be classed among the *great* authors of the Golden Age. His *subject* was great. He did not have to rely upon his own thoughts to create greatness. The greatness was right there before his eyes and all he had to do was *to describe* it. All he needed was a sense of discernment and appreciation of values which, assembled and placed in a personality, made him great. Goriun knew his hero and worshipped him. He had the magnanimity of spirit to discern greatness where it was found. He was the right man to present the life of a great man. Lazar of Pharbe qualifies Goriun's character as "admirable". Indeed, one who can admire is himself admirable. I honor a man who has the bigness of heart to recognize *one greater than himself*. The haughty men cannot admire because they see no greatness except in their puny selves. It is not enough that there be greatness around us; greatness must be recognized.

Alas, this is the age of mediocrity. Those who are mediocre think they are "great", and snub the real great when they meet them. Had the men in the Golden Age been as petty as the men in the present age, there would have been no Golden Age. A nation declines when the *real great* retreat and pettiness and mediocrity come to the front. Armenians dream of a cultural revival and another "Golden Age" which will never come until men and women of this generation learn to discriminate between the common and the uncommon, between pretence and modesty, between truth and falsehood, between brass and gold, between a person whom we may admire without reserve and bias, and one who thrives on flattery.

How far has the present generation moved from the pattern of the generation of the fifth century Armenians? The gap is hopelessly wide. We have completely lost our sense of "hero worshipping". There are no Goriuns among the Armenians of this generation because no one seeks out merit to admire, but merely to knock down. There is at the present time a moral degeneracy which is responsible for the decline of culture, of faith, of great achievements, and equally of great men.

* * *

Goriun is held responsible for the translation of some of the "uncanonical books" of the Bible. Though Goriun himself claims no share in the translation of the Bible, the translation of the "Book of Maccabees" is ascribed to him. He published his biography of St. Mesrop about three years after Mesrop's death, namely, in 444, although the accuracy of the date may be somewhat doubtful. The cycle of literary achievements of the Golden Age would never be complete without Goriun and his magnificent biography of the Master.

PART I
FATHER OF HISTORIANS

THIS IS THE honorary title given to the Greek historian Herotodus. We have borrowed and applied it to Moses of Khoren, the Armenian historian of the fifth century who was the first to write a comprehensive history of the Armenian people starting with Adam and bringing it down to the times of Emperor Zeno the Issaurian, who ruled in Constantinople from 471 to 491 A.D. An Armenian historian of the tenth century, Stephen of Taron (also known as "Asoghig") confers on Moses the distinctive title of "Father of Writers." However, titles do not matter much if the substance of the book is of high order. And, considering the standards of the time in which it was written, Moses of Khoren's "History of Armenians" is indeed of high order.

* * *

Before I attempt to introduce the author and his opus major, the "History of Armenians," I would like to make a few cursory remarks on what constitutes the type of literature which we classify under the category of "history". What must we look for in a "history" that is characteristic of a book in that class and justifies its classification as such?

Let us remember that the earliest forms of literary expression are fables, ballads, sung or recited; in a word, poetry, that is concerned with the deepest emotions of the human soul rather than external events. The earliest service into which the human language was pressed was the need of expression of man's emotions resulting from his relationship with fellow beings or with overwhelming powers in nature he could not explain or understand but which he could adore as "gods". These same emotional reactions caused the creation of legends which became the favorite themes of poetry of later ages.

The process of development of literature has been the same with Armenians.

Modern literature in all languages, as also in Armenian, is diver-

sified. It is diversified because the field of human knowledge and experience has expanded vastly. Scientific discoveries in recent years have opened up large areas in what was once the unknown and the unexplored. We know much more now than they did in the past, so we can write on many more subjects than the ancients could.

* * *

Going back to the fifth century, what do we find there in the field of literature? In general terms, evidence of a deep interest in theology. A thorough study and analysis of the Fifth century Armenian literature will at once reveal its religious nature. Its discussions and expressions are subjective rather than objective experiences. Therefore the writing of "history" is an indication of intellectual development and objectivity and expansion of experiences. And such partial histories as were written by some of the contemporary authors, were essentially a record of religious emotions roused by external events. A distinctive example of this kind of "history" is the "History of Religious Wars" by Elisaeus (Yeghishé) to which I expect to devote a chapter as we go on.

Moses of Khoren really introduced a new type of literature with his history. This history bears evidences of the author's unbiased interest in facts. When we examine the sources from which he drew his facts we will be convinced of his objective historical interest. He consults the Bible as a source book but he also consults, with the same ease and freedom, pagan sources. He does not feel that historical facts must be used in support of preconceived ideas, or experiences or events. In other words, Moses of Khoren is as nearly modern in his approach to historical facts as may be expected from a historian in a period separated from our times by fifteen hundred years.

The history of Moses is not an interpretative history or a "philosophy of history". But then, who ever produced that type of a history of ancient times in any language at all? Until the eighteenth century, when Edward Gibbon produced his classical history on "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," the science of history writing was unknown, in the sense we now understand it. Until then history was, generally speaking, a chronological record of events but not an analysis and interpretation of events related to the life of a nation as a whole. Collecting, or copying, historical information and putting the material together, as some people still do, does not make a book a history book.

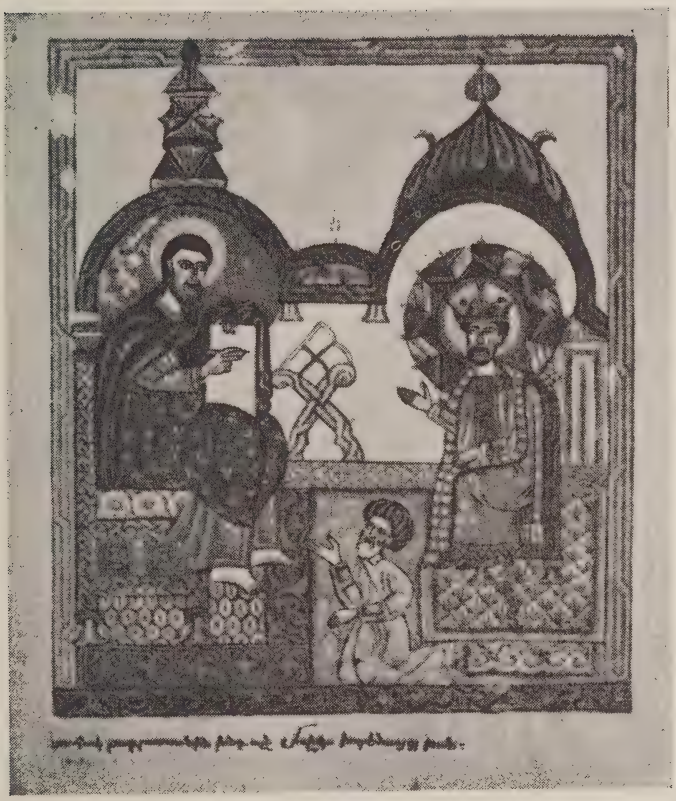
We certainly could not apply scientific standards to the history Moses wrote; and yet however we may consider it we cannot fail to

recognize the scholarly spirit with which he tackled his task. Many authors have written histories of the Armenian people, but most of them are no more critical than the history by Moses. The first critical history of Armenia was written by M. Karakashian late in the 19th century. This means that Moses of Khoren had held its own till then as a source book for historians of later dates.

Moses of Khoren's History has been honored as a classical source book by Europeans and it has been translated into different languages. No other Armenian historian has enjoyed the same international reputation as Moses of Khoren. It may interest my readers to know in what languages and by whom this History has been translated in part or in whole, hence, I want to list some of them for reference.

The earliest translation is in Latin by Brenner, published in 1723, in Stockholm. Another translation into Latin was published by William and George Whiston Brothers. The father of these brothers was a teacher of English in an Armenian school in Madras, India, where he, in turn, learned Armenian, and then taught it to his sons on his return to England. P. E. Le Vaillant de Florival published a French translation in 1836, in Paris; and again, in 1841, in Venice, with some supplementary material and the Armenian text along with the French translation. Victor Langlois translated it anew, and published it in 1870, in Paris, with many comments and footnotes added to the translation. Incidentally, this same author has published translations of many Armenian historians which he has assembled in two large volumes, published in 1880, in Paris, under the title of "Collection des Historiens Anciens et Moderns de l'Armenie". There are two Italian translations both published in Venice, one by N. Tommaseo, and the other by Giuseppe Cappeletti, in 1841 and 1850 respectively. There are two different translations into Russian, one by Hovannissian, and the second by the effort and guidance of Megrditch Eminian, in 1858. The German translation is by Dr. M. Lauer (who is also the author of an Armenian Grammar), published in 1869 in Regensbourg. A Hungarian translation by Christapor Songotian, a teacher in the city of Gerla, was published in 1892.

The Armenian text has gone through many editions, most of which were produced by the Mekhitarist Fathers of Venice. So far as I know, there are only two translations of the text into modern Armenian. The most recent one was done by the late Professor Stepan Malkhassian of Erivan, published in the same city in 1953. Fortunately the spelling in this translation is the traditional Western Armenian spelling, and it is done in a fluent style, easy to read and



This picture from an old MS represents Moses of Khoren with his great patron Sahag Bagradouni.

to understand. There is an earlier translation into modern Armenian by Khoren Vartabed Stepane, published in 1889, in what was then called St. Petersbourg.

I do not believe any other Armenian author, of whatever nature, has been more widely read, nor has any Armenian book gone through more editions than the "History of Armenia" by Moses of Khoren.

Who was Moses? What was his share in the literary movement of the Golden Age? When, how, and why did he write his History? What is the extent and content of his History? How faithfully does he reflect the life of the Armenians during the period he covers? These are some of the questions I will try to answer next time we meet.

PART II
GREATNESS MINUS A HALO

I WANT TO devote this section of the series of studies of the Golden Age to a biographical sketch of Moses of Khoren who has been honored with the title of "Father of Armenian Historians." It is only natural for us to want to learn something about the author whose book we read. I will have to answer a few important questions relative to Moses of Khoren before I get through with him, but for the present the question I want to consider is: Who was this man?

Our sources of information about him are meager and not altogether reliable. Fact and legend about him are intermixed; and sifting one from the other is not always easy. For practical purposes even a few verifiable facts will be sufficient for my readers, I believe. Even in historical research imagination can serve in good stead. Imagination will help us to read what lies between the lines of recorded history.

* * *

We know for a fact that Moses was one of the group of the so-called "Junior Translators" although he did not engage in any sort of "translating". He devoted his time and talent to original writing. The "History of Armenians", of which I spoke in my previous chapter, was his major work. His contribution to the creation and development of the literature of the Golden Age was as great as that of any of the "Translators" (I would prefer calling them "Scholars"), and judging by certain standards, even greater than anyone else's.

To differentiate his identity from other "Moses," he attached the name of his native village to his personal name. That was a common practice in those days--indeed, a practice that persisted through centuries until recent times when the use of family names came into vogue.

For the search and choice of the earliest students to receive training for service to the great program of national awakening, St.

Mesrop, rather than St. Sahag, was responsible. He did not have to go very far to find Moses, who was his nephew. Moses had inherited his brains from forebears who were richly blessed with them. And the brains he had, Uncle Mesrop took it upon himself to develop.

Moses had the advantage of a thorough education, and he made excellent use of it, becoming one of the distinguished scholars the age produced.

Dates of birth for any person in the mists of the past are conjectural at best. I must rely upon those who have taken pains to get as close to actual dates as thorough historical research will permit them. The date set for the birth of Moses by the distinguished scholar of the University of Erivan, the late Dr. Stepan Malkasian, is 410 A.D.

Moses received his earliest schooling in Sunik from whence he was transferred to Valarshabat for secondary studies under St. Mesrop in the Central School which the Masters had established. No student was accepted in this school unless he had proven his merit and promised to be useful to the nation in some distinct capacity. So, like others in his class, he was sent abroad for advanced studies. He learned Greek first in Alexandria, Egypt, from a nameless teacher of whom Moses later spoke with deep feelings of admiration and affection. Alexandria was at that time what we would call, using a modern term, a famous "University Center". He later sojourned in Constantinople in order to achieve mastery of Greek and other sciences. For the study of Syriac, students were sent to Edessa. Moses, too, was there for some time in order to become proficient in that ancient language.

Armenians have from ancient times to present times been linguists. There are obvious reasons for this. Armenians could not possibly be self-sufficient linguistically. They would be isolated culturally, economically, politically from neighboring nations unless they could communicate with them in the language they spoke. Great nations naturally impose their own language upon small nations. In modern times English, French, and German have been more or less universal languages. In the fifth century Greek, Syriac, Persian were just as important to know. Moreover, the main object of the Masters was to train "translators" needed, primarily, for the translation of the Bible, and secondarily, for the translation of classical and current literature which they carefully selected and assigned to these "translators" to enhance the spiritual and cultural development of the people. Culture produces culture by stimulation. Translations paved the way for original writing.

Let me casually note here the importance of foreign study and study in as distant a time as the fifth century. No student who graduated from a local school, or even from the Central School in Valarshabat, would consider his education completed unless he travelled to a foreign center of learning and spent some time there as a student.

The habitual practice of many English students at Oxford or Cambridge, for instance, has been, for a great many years past, to travel on the Continent of Europe (usually, France, Germany, and Italy) as a necessary part of their education. In a similar sense, and many centuries before there was an Oxford or Cambridge, or even English, or English culture, Armenian students travelled extensively in all parts of the known world during and after the fifth century, and engaged themselves in the "trade" of importing learning into their own native land. Or, can we also stretch the point a little further and say that the original roots of the English system of Higher Education can in part be found in the Armenian system back in the fifth century. Armenians have learned much from the English, no doubt; but perhaps the English will admit, if they will swallow their pride, a small measure of debt to the Armenians in the field of education.

And travelling in the fifth century was not like anything it is today (even forgetting for a moment the transportation facilities on "a magic carpet"); it was extremely hazardous and difficult. The roads were often infested by brigands; dangers lurked on all sides. The means of transportation were primitive. Walking long distances was not an uncommon practice. The most "comfortable" means of travel was on the back of a pack animal, on land; or in small sail boats, on water. In ancient times, only students burning with the passion for learning would be willing to face the hazards and hardships of travel.

And Moses travelled extensively while still comparatively young. He was at one time or another in Antioch, Palestine, Athens, Rome. He spent most of his student days in Edessa, Alexandria, and Constantinople. His training was as complete as that of any of the students sent abroad. He returned home fully equipped for service in any position to which he might be assigned. But, alas, no sooner had he landed than he was met by painful disappointments.

Who knows? Perhaps the fault lay with him, rather than with "the star under which he was born." Perhaps his intellectual superiority was a liability for attaining success in public life. He roused the suspicion and jealousy of the conservative elements in

the clergy. There was cleavage between the clergy with a background of Syriac education and others with Greek education. Greek training was closely associated with liberal ideas in theology and philosophy. And the Conservatives would give no quarter to their superiors. Mediocrity and superiority were encamped against each other, mediocrity using the same arms of slander, simony, falsehood, as it does at all times, to discredit its superiors in the opposite camp.

Temperamentally and intellectually Moses failed to compromise with his enemies and went through agonies for years, neglected, unemployed, homeless, and foodless. Can such a fate be imagined for a man like Moses? But that, unfortunately, was actually his fate.

Then, also, he found the country politically in an agonizing crisis. When he left the country in pursuit of learning in foreign lands, it was half-way independent and there was a sovereign King on the throne. But on his return both King and Independence had "gone to the winds." The Masters were dead and buried. In his own native land he felt a stranger, completely lost and helpless. Moses was not cut out to be a leader, neither, indeed, to be a fighter, asserting his merit and standing upon his rights. Possibly he also lacked initiative. Somebody had to take him up and make use of his talents. But who was to be that person? There was none. And so for years this man, Moses of Khoren, "the Father of Armenian Historians," had to go around in rags and beg for food to keep his body and soul together. What a pity! This has happened oftener than one could think it possible, at all times, and in all generations, down to our own days. "What?", many will remark with indignation, "To let such a great man as Moses of Khoren starve! . . . It is unthinkable!" Paradoxically, the very same people who resent evidences of cruelty to others in the past, will be themselves as cruel to their own contemporaries. One of the flagrant failures in the life of the Armenian people today is still the cruelty shown to men and women who deserve admiration and affection. And how can the mystery of this paradox be explained except by the perversity of human nature. . . .

However, finally a light broke through the dark clouds that hung over the head of this unfortunate man for many years. A fellow student, Gute, was raised to the headship of the Church in 461. Moses was then in a neglected small monastery (vank). How would the Catholicos know anything about him unless Moses himself revealed his identity and misery to him? So, he went to visit the Catholicos whom possibly he had not seen since their student years in Constantinople. Moses was received warmly. The Catholicos

ordained him a bishop and set him over the diocese of Bagrevand. He also helped him in whatever way he could. So, Moses soon regained his self-respect and sense of mission. His enemies restrained their tongues. He could now work with a purpose in life. And he did. He proved his worth with the services he rendered to the Church as one of its diocesan bishops; also, to the general program of national enlightenment.

Though Moses suffered long yet somehow he managed to live long. He survived his friend and benefactor, Catholicos Gute; and, as luck would have it, his station in life did not change with the death of the Catholicos because Gute was succeeded by Hovhan Mantagooni, another of the group of "Junior Translators" whom Moses also knew personally. He seems to have lived through the entire term of service of the Catholicos Hovhan Mantagooni (478-490), the uncertain date of his death being around 490. This means that he was contemporary of six Catholici, beginning with St. Sahag, and disregarding the three foreign Catholici who had usurped the seat of the Catholicos for a short interval.

Moses began his career when he was past sixty. He himself speaks of his "old age" when he was called to the service of the Church. But, the advantage of usefulness is not always on the side of youth. Age, in terms of number of years, is deceptive. No matter how "old", if a person has the vigor of youth, and brilliance of mind, and dedication to great ideals, he is as good as youth. Moses of Khoren turned out to be a remarkably "youthful" old man.

PART III
A VERITABLE SOURCE-BOOK

ALL NATIONAL AND foreign historians familiar with Khorenatsi's "History of Armenians" agree that it is a veritable "source book" for information on a wide range of subjects concerning the life of the Armenian people during the period it covers.

My personal considered opinion is that the author of this significant book treats his subject "scientifically", in a qualified sense, although he himself is definitely a poet and an artist rather than a "scientist" in the modern sense of the word. I would best describe Khorenatsi's History as an "epic" history of a nation. In other words, it is history glorified in poetry. One reads this book equally as a book of history and poetry all at once. It has a character all its own, and entirely unique because of it.

In reading Khorenatsi's history I have often asked myself: Was Moses primarily a poet or a historian? Or, what was the stronger urge in him for writing this book—the urge to write "poetry" or the urge to write "history?" No matter whatever else anyone may have to say about the content of this book, the consensus is that it is a literary masterpiece.

As modern parallels to Khorenatsi's History, I would mention among others, Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" for one; or Lord Macaulay's "History of England" for another; or Motley's "The Rise of the Dutch Republic" for still another. I do not mean to imply that as books of "history" there is a common denomination of merit for them all; no, except that literary style of presentation of the subject matter bears common marks of similarity. And this particular aspect of Khorenatsi's History I will presently illustrate. First, a brief analysis of its sources; then of its content.

* * *

Moses undertook to write his "History" as a project requested, or ordered, by Sahag Bagratouni, a prominent member of the

Armenian nobility, whom the Revolutionary Party, headed by Vahan Mamikonian, had appointed as the titular governor of Armenia, after the Armenian army was defeated by the Persians at the Battle of Avarair in 451, and Armenia was reduced to a vassal state. During long years of political turmoil, insecurity, and conflict, the affairs of the state were in a mess. The loss of independence had demoralized the people. It was very natural for Sahag Bagratouni, who was trying to pull the broken threads together and recreate order out of chaos, that he should be interested in a comprehensive history of the people whose affairs he was called upon to administer in a critical time. He wanted to build up the country upon the foundations of clear knowledge of its past traditions, aspirations, and ideals. Evidently there was not a compact source of information of the past of Armenians up until that time, namely, about the close of the fifth century.

The domination of a foreign power over Armenia was openly hostile to the Christian culture of the Armenians. This was a serious menace to their soul. Hence, Sahag felt that what he himself needed to know, the people in general also needed, to sustain their national consciousness under adverse conditions. So, among other remedial means he devised, he thought a good record of the past deeds of a brave nation would serve a constructive purpose. Therefore, he drafted Moses, whose fame had reached his ears, and set him to the task of writing a history which would cover a period from the earliest origins of the nation down to the days in which they lived.

* * *

Moses went about his assignment earnestly and in the manner in which a historian of today would go about a similar assignment. He had to look for, and find, sources of information. Possibly this would not be a serious problem for a historian of today. But it was for a historian like Moses, living in the fifth century. Sources of information were then scarce. The most amazing fact is that Moses found as many sources of information as he did and produced a history that, in its turn, has become the main source of all subsequent histories from the fifth century down to the twentieth.

Father Michael Chamchian, who is the author of the first "modern" history of Armenians, has practically reproduced Khorenatsi's History, for the period it covers; and all other histories down to the very last by V. M. Kurkjian, though critical no doubt, are basically inspired by Khorenatsi's History of Armenia.

And why so? For the very simple reason that no other comprehensive history of Armenia exists besides Khorenatsi's history.

If there were others, nobody has ever seen or known of them. But that question is not our concern now.

We are interested in having some idea of the sources Moses found and utilized to produce his History.

He had access to some forty sources—some in Greek, some in Syriac, and some in Chaldean, besides those which were in Armenian, all of which he could read and understand in the original languages in which they were written.

I do not intend to bore my readers with a complete bibliography of sources Moses used; but I will take up a few only and present them as briefly as I can.

It is expected that a scholar should indicate clearly all the sources he has consulted. That is exactly what Moses does. Although, for whatever reason, he is discreet about some of them. He does not always treat his material critically. We must assume that he passes on to his readers information in which possibly he believed but which is now proven to be false. But it was not truth that he always sought; he was also attracted by beauty. The poet in him and the historian sat side by side in search for and assembly of material for his history. Hence there is much in his "History" that is beautiful but not true; also, that is true but not beautiful.

* * *

As one source, he drew heavily upon the Bible. That I will take up later.

As another, it was a historical document of doubtful origin, by a Syriac cleric by the name of "Mar" (the equivalent of the Armenian title "Ter") Apas Katina.

Who was this man supposed to be?

He was supposedly an Assyrian scholar who was commissioned by King Vagharshag of Armenia to search for a source of Armenian history so that he could settle the question of protocol among Armenian feudal lords that caused endless conflicts among them. He thought there might be some book on the subject in the Library of Nineveh in the dominion of his brother, Arshag, the King of Parthians. So he dispatched this man to him with a letter begging him to let Mar-Apas have access to the Library. The story is that he accomplished his mission with success. He was accorded all the facilities to make his research in the Library in Nineveh and luckily he came upon a record originally written in Chaldean which Alexander the Great had translated into Greek during the period of his invasion of Asia. This record had also an extended account of the past history of Armenians. It was a copy of this account that Mar-Apas brought back to Vargharshag. It is this account that

A sample of Armenian Ms of the 14th century in the National Library of Erivan. This is the title page of the History of Armenian by Moses of Khoren.

serves as the main source of information for Moses for the legendary past of Armenians.

The misty past of any nation is legendary anyway. What if Moses borrows all these legends in his endeavor to reconstruct the background of Armenians lost in the distant past? Legends are the spice flavoring the life of a nation. Legends are symbols to the enlightened mind, whereas, in the fifth century, they were the very substance of "history" in which they believed. They were still in the stage of an "Alice in Wonderland". We are not. Whether they were better off than we because of their wanderings in a Wonderland, is a question that cannot be resolved as easily as we think.

* * *

Now, what is significant is the fact that Moses, as a "historian," uses folklore as a source of information. He is interested not only in external events which would constitute the bulk of history, but also, and perhaps even primarily, with the emotions and the spiritual reactions of the human soul. Moreover, what goes on in the human soul gives shape to external events which history records. Moses looks into the soul of human beings as he does at external events. He has a sharp eye to detect the human drama on its comic and tragic sides. I repeat: He is as much of a poet as a historian.

I cannot do better to illustrate the "poet" in Khorenatsi than to quote verbatim two of his many legends in the English translation by the late Zabelle C. Boyajian, in her magnificent volume entitled "Armenian Legends and Poems" of which a new edition was recently put out by the AGBU.

The legend tells of a skirmish between the Armenians and the Alans, in which the crown prince of the Alans was taken prisoner by the Armenians. The Armenian King, Artashes, placed a high ransom price on the head of the prince. Just what transpired between the bargaining parties is the substance of the legend that follows:

"At this time the Alans united with the people of the mountain country, and having taken possession of half of Georgia, spread themselves in great multitudes over our land. And Artashes collected a mighty host together, and there was war between the two great nations. The Alans retreated somewhat, and crossed over the river Kur, so that the river was between them. But because the son of the King of the Alans was taken captive by the Armenian hosts and brought to Artashes, the King of the Alans sought peace with him, promising to give to Artashes whatsoever he should ask. And he swore an eternal peace unto him, so that the sons of the Alans might not be carried away captive into the land of the Armenians.

And when Artashes would not consent to give back the youth, his sister came to the river's bank and stood upon a great rock. And by means of interpreters she spoke to the camp of Artashes, saying: 'O brave Artashes, who hast vanquished the great nation of the Alans, unto thee I speak. Come, hearken unto the bright-eyed daughter of the King of Alans, and give back the youth. For it is not the way of heroes to destroy life at the root, nor for the sake of humbling and enslaving a hostage to establish everlasting enmity between two great nations.'

"On hearing such wise sayings, Artashes went to the bank of the river. And seeing that the maiden was beautiful, and having heard these words of wisdom from her, he desired her. And calling Simpad, his chamberlain, he told him of the wishes of his heart, and commended that he should obtain the maiden for him, swearing unto the great nation of Alans vows of peace, and promising to send the youth back in safety. And this appeared wise in the eyes of Simpad, who sent messengers unto the King of the Alans asking him to give the lady Satenik, his daughter, as wife unto Artashes.

"And the King of the Alans answered: 'From whence shall brave Artashes give thousands upon thousands, and tens of thousands unto the Alans in return for the maiden.' "

But Artashes dropped the bargain and resorted to the short-cut method of kidnapping the beautiful maiden, as the custom then was for the mighty and the brave. And his adventures Khorenatsi says were sung by the people even during his life time which he quotes as follows:

"Brave King Artashes
Mounted his fine black charger,
And took the red leather cord
With the golden ring.
Like a swift-winged eagle
He passed over the river,
And cast the golden ring
Round the Waist of the Alan Princess;
Causing much pain
To the tender maiden
As he bore her swiftly
Back to his camp."

And inevitably the wedding followed with lavish festivities, at which, as sung,

"It rained showers of gold when Artashes became a bridegroom.
It rained pearls when Satenik became a bride."

The point is that this is *not* history, but it is better than history

for us; it is *literature* with enduring value. Further, it is a picture, as colorful as a painting would be, of the daily life of the Armenian people who lived nearly two thousand years ago. And to that extent, and in that sense, it is also *history* par excellence.

* * *

Let us consider another delightful example, the legend of Semiramis and Ara the Handsome. It goes like this:

"For a few years before the death of Ninus, Ara reigned over Armenia under his Protectorate, and found the same favor in his eyes as his father Aram had done. But that wanton and lustful woman, Semiramis, having heard for many years of the beauty of Ara, wished to possess him; only she ventured not to do anything openly. But after the death or the escape of Ninus to Crete, as it hath been affirmed unto me, she displayed her passion freely, and sent messengers to Ara the Beautiful with gifts and offerings, with many prayers and promises of riches, begging him to come to her in Nineveh and either wed her and reign over all that Ninus had possessed, or fulfill her desires and return in peace to Armenia.

"And when the messengers had gone forth and returned many times and Ara had not consented, Semiramis became very angry. So, she arose and took all the multitude of her hosts and hastened to the land of Armenia to wage war on Ara. But, as she had previously declared it was not so much to kill him and persecute him that she went as to subdue him and bring him by force to fulfill the desires of her passion. For, having been consumed with desire by what she had heard of him, on seeing him she became as one beside herself. She arrived in this state of turmoil at the plains of Ara, called after him, Ararat. And when the battle was about to take place, she commanded her generals to devise means of saving the life of Ara. But in the course of the fighting the army of Ara was defeated, and Ara was dead, having been slain by the warriors of Semiramis.

"After the battle the Queen sent out to the battlefield to search for the body of her beloved amongst those who had fallen dead. And they found the body of Ara among the brave who had fallen. So, she commanded them that they should place the body in an upper chamber in her castle.

"But when the hosts of Armenia arose once more against Queen Semiramis to avenge the death of Ara, she said to them: 'I have commanded the gods to lick his wounds, and he shall relive.' In the meantime she thought of bringing Ara back to life by witchcraft and charm, for she was crazed by the intensity of her desires.

But when the body began to decay, she commanded them to cast it into a deep pit, and to cover it. And having dressed up one of her men in secret, she sent forth the famè of him thus: 'The gods have licked Ara and have brought him back to life again, thus fulfilling our prayers and our pleasure. Therefore from this time forth shall they be the more glorified and worshipped by us, for that because they are the givers of joy and fulfillers of desire.' She also erected a new statue in honor of the gods and worshipped it with many sacrifices, as though the gods had brought Ara back to life again. And having caused this report to be spread over all the land of Armenia, and satisfied the people, she put an end to the fighting. And she took the son of Ara whom his wife Nuvart had borne unto him, and who was but twelve years of age at the time of his father's death. And she called his name Ara in memory of her love for Ara the Handsome, and appointed him ruler over the land of Armenia, trusting him in all things."

Now, is this "history"? Again, yes and no.

The bards of the Middle Ages sang the brave deeds of heroes building up their themes on what their poetic imagination provided rather than on knowledge of actual facts, which was usually very slim. All they needed was a spark to let their imagination burst out into a flame of exquisite poetry. So also in the case of the Armenian bards, and of their "king," Moses of Khoren.

The legend of Semiramis and Ara the Handsome (others call him "the Beautiful") symbolizes the deathly struggle between Assyria and Armenia, which is not "legend" but true history. But more! Moses sought evidences of heroism in the distant past to inspire the stooping spirits of his contemporaries with self-confidence and hope for the future. There was a deeper purpose in this History than what is apparent. His legends were not meant to entertain but to stimulate. The people had to be saved from a suicidal state of mind that makes them say: "Oh, what is the use?" The drooping spirit of heroism of the people had to be stimulated. Sahag Bagratuni had the right idea when he called upon Moses to revive the record of the heroic past of the nation in truth or in legend. They were in sore need of such stimulation. And Moses was instrumental in devising that stimulus in poetry and history.

And then again, we see in this legend a reflection of the domestic virtues of Armenians even during the pagan period of their history. The national traditions of morality go back to the very beginnings of Armenian history. Its foundations are pre-Christian. Christianity was not built on the slippery sands of pagan immorality; no, but on the solid ground of morality that went way back to their na-

tional origins. Armenians are people of high standards of personal and social morality because their ancestors believed in and practiced these standards.

Moses of Khoren is revealed in his History not only as a historian, in the ordinary sense of the word, but also as a social scientist, a philosopher, and, as I have already brought out, a poet of high order. Indeed, Moses has been called "Father of Poets" (if the Armenian word "kertogh" is to be interpreted in its modern sense of "poet").

PART IV
A SCHOLAR

WE ARE living in an age of specialization. Moses of Khoren lived in an age of generalization. Let me make these terms of differentiation between the modern and the ancient clear, because unless we understand them clearly we will be unable to fully and correctly estimate the intellectual background of Khorenatsi. He is, as we saw, a historian par excellence. But we cannot just leave him in that category of authorship and be done with him. He was all of that—a distinguished historian by the highest standards of the term. But he was also much more. He was a gifted poet. I have already elaborated that side of his intellect. But now I want to impress upon my readers the fact that he also was a scholar with encyclopaedic knowledge. He practically knew everything there was to be known in his age. That was the nature of knowledge in those ancient times any way. Specialization was unknown in the age in which Moses lived in the sense we use now the term of "specialized knowledge." The "university" for ancients was confined, as I have explained in a former chapter, to one individual teacher who was supposed to know every knowledgeable fact in every field; and it was his business to pass the entire store of his knowledge to his pupil. An accomplished scholar was, therefore, the possessor of "universal" knowledge.

Moses was a scholar in this sense. He was a first class linguist. He knew Greek as well as he did his own mother tongue; also, Syriac; also Persian. These languages were his media for gathering knowledge on whatever subject he was interested in. He was thoroughly grounded in Greek literature; and one of his main occupations was to read and study Greek authors. He was also a thoroughgoing theologian, familiar with the orthodox thinking of the time as well as with the heretical views and doctrines which, like Manichaeism, were propagated widely and ardently by the missionaries of heresies. He was, what we might call in the modern usage of the term, also a "biblical scholar." He knew his Bible cover to cover, as a brilliant member of the clergy such as he was

supposed to. Then, again, he seems to have had a deep interest in Geography, if the book on that subject can be ascribed to his authorship. Even if the authorship of this book could be established in his favor, still it is not an original work on the subject, for it was inspired by or copied from a well known Greek author who expounded the Ptolemaic views of the formation and geography of the earth. The point is that Moses had a wide range of knowledge, nearly comprehensive for his time.

This raises the question whether or not a scholar of this generation can be judged superior to a scholar of ancient times, like Khorenatsi, for instance. This is a relative question. In the first place, the present day scholar is an heir to a vast accumulation of knowledge through centuries of progress in every field of science and humanities. This vastness and diversity of knowledge make specialization imperative at the present time. So, although a scholar in this age knows more of some particular subject than a scholar in ancient times did, still he hardly knows anything of any other subject. The advantage of the ancient scholar over the modern was the comprehensiveness of his knowledge. An outstanding example of such a scholar is Moses of Khoren. Let us not dismiss these ancient scholars lightheartedly. For universal knowledge they could easily challenge scholars of any age, including our own. And what they did know they knew thoroughly, not just a smattering of it. Further, matching intellect with intellect, they were just as bright as any we may admire in our generation. There is no such thing as "growth of intellect." Socrates didn't have to live in the twentieth century to possess a "Socratic" intellect; or a Plato, or an Aristotle, or a Khorenatsi. It is knowledge only that grows; and knowledge is the content of intellect but not the intellect itself.

Leaving the discussion of this phase of the question at this point, let us now turn to our immediate subject of interest which can be defined with a question like this: In what way did Moses of Khoren demonstrate his scholarly qualities?

* * *

A university professor of mine defined a "scholar" in these words: "A scholar is one who knows about one subject *all* there is to be known; and he knows his way to sources of other subjects about which he does not know." I think that is as clear a definition as I have seen anywhere. By this definition Moses of Khorenatsi was even *more* than a scholar as I indicated. He was a scholar not only in *one* field of knowledge, but in many.

In the first place he was an excellent research man. He knew where he could find the information he needed. As I already

mentioned, he consulted as many as forty different sources among which some were prominent historians, such as Eusebius, Ariston, Porphyry of Tyre, Philemon, the Sibylline Books, etc. And for the earliest beginnings of national history he went all the way back to Adam and Eve and he drew amply on the Bible.

In the second place, he did not always accept what his sources offered as true. He exercised critical standards of judgment to distinguish the chaff from the grain. However, at many points he was swayed by the poet in him and he constructed what is supposed to be history on sentimental stuff such as popular songs and tales.

And again, in the third place, he tried to fit all the information he gathered into a preconceived pattern of history. He attempted to show that Armenians had a birthright to a glorious life. A glorious past must have a sequence of glory in the present and in the future. He believed that Armenians were a people of destiny; that they had a mission; that the past had the seeds for a great future. He was prophetic in his views of the history of the nation as he wrote it. And he was bitter in his disappointment in the decadence of the political life of the nation during his lifetime. Hence his so-called "Lamentations" which constitute an appendix to his history.

And finally, he approached all his problems with the typical Greek mind. Not necessarily critical, but imaginative, and poetic, and deliberative. His mind was soaked in Greek thinking. He was an ardent admirer of Greek thought and poetry. He stated in his history that the Greek intellect was "the mother of all wisdom." He aspired to cast Armenian thoughts into Greek thought as in form also in content. He failed in this dream of his because the political cleavage between the Greeks and Armenians was broadening. Greek was the language of a strong political power which, in rivalry with the Persian power, worked like a vise squeezing Armenia between them to extinction. Political antagonism neutralized the cultural influence of Greek thought that might otherwise contribute to the enlightenment and spiritual emancipation of Armenians. Politics has often interfered adversely in a nation's life, as it surely did in the life of Armenians when Khorenatsi lived.

He was interested in the records by Mar-Apas Katina of Chaldean origin, because it had the supposed stamp of approval of Alexander the Great who, as referred to before, had them translated into Greek. The credential of authority of that source was the fact of its translation into Greek. If these records were worthy of occupying their place in the great library of Alexandria (Moses might have

thought) they were also worthy of his perusal for such information as he needed for his history.

* * *

Moses of Khoren found himself in a precarious situation when, in the course of his researches, he labored to determine the origin of Armenians. He found that external sources varied from the biblical sources. How then could he manipulate his records to bring about reasonable conformity between the two? He resorted to the common practice of toning down, or changing, the one to fit the other. In plain words, he distorted the biblical stories. The story of Noah is an illustration in point. But what was his purpose in doing what he did? Very simple! He wanted to place the biblical authority behind the story of the origin of the Armenian people, tracing it way back to "Togarmah" (Armenian: Torkom), one of the great-grandsons of Noah; or the grandson of one of Noah's three sons, Japheth.

But why this zeal to push back the origin of Armenians to the misty past of the Deluge? I have answered that question already, but, for a footnote, I would inject this remark: It was to serve as a warning to Armenians who were on the verge of decline. He meant so say: "Your ancestors have come out of a Deluge, and escaped the wrath of God; now, guard yourselves against the danger of walking into another season of chastisement. Wake up, and look ahead with hope and courage to be true to God and to achieve His great purposes for you!"

* * *

The History of Armenians by this man Moses of Khoren is the fruit of the labor of a remarkable scholar. Every chapter of it bears evidence of his erudition, patient research, ability to organize his information, and to state his facts effectively with color and the flourish of imagination enlivening them.

He has divided his history into three distinct divisions or sections. The first section deals with origins (its title is "Genealogy") which in turn is subdivided into thirty-two short chapters. The second section is entitled "Middle History" and has ninety-two chapters. The third book he calls "Concluding Words" or, in modern terms, "Later Times of Armenian History," recorded in sixty-eight chapters.

Is this history meaningful for our generation? My answer is definitely, Yes! The reason? Because we, too, in our generation need as much as the Armenians in the fifth century its fundamental message as spoken in terms of the events and experiences described

and interpreted by the author; namely, that a nation must be deeply conscious of her mission and shape her course in a way to achieve her mission. If Khorenatsi were alive now, after surveying the present state of affairs, he would produce a history with the same basic ideas of warning and the same urging to pursue a constructive national goal.

I TRIED TO outline the life of Moses of Khoren and to estimate the value of his work in four parts in these pages. I should have noted that Moses had a younger brother called Mampré who was himself a scholar of distinction and a graduate of the "University of Armenia" that was presided over by Sts. Sahag and Mesrop. He is classed, along with his older brother, Moses, with the so-called "Junior Translators," or, the second crop of students who were trained to participate actively in the grand plan of spiritual and intellectual enlightenment of the Armenian people during the period we are studying, namely, the Golden Age in the fifth century A.D.

We do not know much about Mampré but such meager accounts or casual references to him as we find in scattered sources help us to form the picture of a man who had a brilliant mind which he could use in thinking deep thoughts. No wonder he was called "The Thinker" or, a philosopher. Unfortunately, the product of his thinking has not reached us, except for two essays or "Orations," the one on the resurrection of Lazarus, and the other on the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Even the authenticity of the authorship of these two essays is seriously doubted.

He was, though, as thoroughly educated as any of the rest of the "translators" or prize students, as we would like to call them. He was given the opportunity to study in all the branches of science of that day, as well as languages, in Athens, Alexandria, and Constantinople, which, as we know, were among the famous university centers of that age. It should be remembered that among brothers of highly gifted minds, one will surpass them all in the superiority of his intellect and productivity. So, between these two brothers, Moses had a marked advantage over his brother, Mampré.

* * *

Now, I want to introduce another figure who played a distinctive role in the movement of national enlightenment, but in a capacity somewhat different from that of some of the others who, as we saw

in previous chapters, contributed to it with great success. The difference in his role was due to the external conditions in which he found himself. I am referring to Hovhan Mantagouni, who occupied the seat of the Catholicate in a very critical time for the Armenian people. We can estimate the value of the services rendered by a man in the light of the conditions under which he labored; and by the same token, we can best interpret historical events in terms of the men who were involved in it and had an active part in shaping these events.

Let me then sketch in broad lines the political stage on which this great man played his role effectively.

This is the period following the heroic but unsuccessful struggle of Armenians against the Sassanian rulers of Persia to maintain their political and religious freedom. We all know the meaning of 451. It is a date made sacred by the blood of Vartan and his small army, shed on the battle ground of Avarair for faith in Jesus Christ, whom they had solemnly declared no conceivable power on earth could make them forsake, "neither angels, nor men, neither sword, nor fire, nor bodily tortures however cruel." There is nothing in the entire course of the history of Armenians that brings out more lucidly the secret of the survival of such a small nation through the past 16 centuries or more, beset, as they were, almost continuously, by conditions hostile to their national life, than just that statement in the letter the Assembly of Armenian Bishops addressed to the Persian King in the name of the people, previous to the battle of Avarair. Who, tell me, could pronounce such a firm determination to be unshaken in the faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and die? "Were we even immortal, still it would be worth dying for the love of Christ, for he himself was immortal and died for our sakes . . . Our bond of faith is not with men to be fooled with; it is with God, with whom we are bound in bonds indissoluble for now and for ever and ever!"

In human affairs an apparent failure may often result in good; and a success, in evil. So the ultimate success of the struggle of Armenians against the Persians for freedom of conscience was not to be determined by the success or failure of a single battle. The struggle had to go on after the initial failure. And it did go on for thirty years or more until the Armenians attained their object. And the principal leaders of this second round of fighting were Vahan Mamikonian and the Catholicos, Hovhan Mantagouni.

The Battle of Avarair, though it ended in the defeat of Armenians, served two definite ends. First, it deepened in Armenians the sense of value of "things of the spirit." And, in the second place,

it convinced the Persians that they could not break that spirit by violence. As a result of this realization, the Persians changed their tactics in dealing with the Armenians. They tried to win them over with sweet words and promises. They set on a new plan of conquest of the spirit. They softened their resistance with gifts instead of compulsion and oppression. They held out lucrative positions in the service of the government to whoever was willing to compromise with his personal morals or faith or politics. These deceptive devices worked with individuals of a weak nature who would easily yield to the wiles of a tempting promise. Especially men of prominence, members of the aristocracy, fell for these promises. Most of them had lost prestige and power and they were hungry for regaining what they had lost, and they thought the opportunity was too precious to let it slip because of religious or political scruples. So this strategy of the Trojan Horse capturing the spiritual fort of the Armenian people from within, while the effort to capture it from without had failed, assumed the proportions of a disastrous menace to their national life. Therefore, facing this menace, these two leaders determined to seek a way of salvation. Vahan assumed the military leadership for driving the enemy out of the country, and the Catholicos assumed the spiritual leadership to save the people from moral degeneration and loss of faith in Christ, for whom they had been willing to suffer and die only a short while before.

And the combined efforts of these two leaders were crowned with success.

Vahan managed to snatch a treaty from the proud King of the Persians, Peroz, at Newarsag, with which virtually all the conditions of Armenians were conceded, and complete freedom of conscience granted. Armenia was still a vassal state but it now became an autonomous state with a governor of its own nationality, and Vahan as the commander-in-chief of its armies

The Battle of Avarair in 451, and the Treaty of Newarsag in 481, only thirty years apart from each other, should be closely associated in our mind, for the seeds of freedom were sown in a battle lost, which, however, bore their fruit later.

* * *

And now a few remarks about Hovhan Mantagouni of saintly memory himself.

Hovhan replaced Catholicos Gute (to whom we have referred before) who had disgraced himself in the sight of the ruling King of Persia on the one hand for his deep sympathies with Western

Culture, and on the other, for his open and secret hostility to Eastern paganism championed by Persia. Gute was deposed by Peroz as a menace to the success of his plans of conquest of Armenia politically and spiritually, but Peroz evidenced lack of judgment and imagination when he approved of Hovhan as the successor, for, he too was committed to the task of awakening the people to a sense of superiority of the spiritual values the West stood for over against those the East did. In fact Hovhan was by far the more fanatical and aggressive in his convictions and activities than his predecessor. And the ensuing events proved that he was and, whether Peroz realized it or not, he brought on the ruin of his plans with his own hands by the appointment of Hovhan as the Catholicos of Armenians, in which capacity Hovhan served them with great power and wisdom from 478 to 490. Gute shepherded his people as the spiritual head of the church from 461 to 478, even longer than Hovhan. And I would say that the aims for which and the spirit in which they both functioned were the same. They were both bearers of the cross of Jesus in one hand, the sword in the other. As a rule that has been true with the Armenian hierarchy throughout the history of the nation. The typical example of such an attitude was originally set by the Catholicos Hovsep of Avarair fame.

Exactly what Catholicos Hovsep did and meant for Vartan Mamigonian, Catholicos Hovhan Mantagouni did and meant for Vahan Mamigonian. They both were spiritual generals in a battle for the admiration and gratitude of the Armenians of all generations.

I would not say that Hovhan Mantagouni was a distinguished man of letters or a scholar. He was neither. Possibly he would have been one if the circumstances of his life had been different. He was too involved in a sad political situation, as I pointed out, to apply himself to serious literary labor. He was the author of so-called "Orations," or Sermons, which had been inspired by the existing conditions of life and aimed at rebuilding the faith of the people doctrinally and morally. They provide interesting reading on the basis of their own content, and also, as a side-light upon the life of the people in that particular period of national stress and strain.

He was also an authority on church ritual and rubrics. Quite a few of the ceremonial orders, such as Baptism, Marriage, and others, are ascribed to him. He was insistent upon correct procedures in every aspect of the worship and ceremonials of whatever nature. Some of his prayers are preserved in the Prayer Book

of the Church. These are meaningful and proceed from a soul eager to see his people spiritually awakened and in communion with the heart of God.

A study of the lives of these great men makes one feel the tremendous contribution the Armenian Clergy has made to the endurance of the national life through tireless efforts to help the people keep their faith alive in the sustaining power of ideas and ideals, of which the eternal source is the Gospel of Christ so persistently and fervently preached by God's servants.

TRAINING FOR A PURPOSE

SAINTLY SAHAG and Mesrop selected and trained their students each for a definite task. In general terms, as we have already seen, the aim was to introduce into the country a ready-made culture from neighboring countries who had it. Armenians in the fifth century A.D. were quite familiar with the culture of their immediate neighbor, the Persians, who at the time were also their political masters. However, Armenians had little taste for Persian culture since they had been converted to Christianity and had rejected the fanatical Zoroastrianism the Persians attempted to force upon them. Sahag and Mesrop would have none of "heathenism" for their people, not its thinking, beliefs, morals, or practices. It was not enough to preach against them. They had to put something different in their place, to draw the people away from them and arouse their interest in another type of culture. And so, the ultimate purpose of the Masters was *to create* a spiritual conflict between the thought of the East and the West. The Persian culture was unchallenged until these two prophets appeared on the scene. They created and organized the forces to counteract the "heathen culture" of the Persians. And, as we saw, they succeeded gloriously because they planned wisely, and executed their plans with remarkable determination.

The contributing factors to the enlightenment of the spirit and mind of the Armenian people were to be found in the Holy Writ, and in the thought of the western mind. The students they selected had to be in turn teachers in the land. So they went out to master the language and thought of the Greek world and returned to communicate that thought to their pupils in translations.

This was the basic rule that governed and directed the course of each individual student. But here and there, in rare cases, there were deviations from the rule. Practically all the students who were sent abroad mastered Greek. They studied with well-known theologians, and mastered that branch of their studies also. Rhetoric and grammar were subjects prescribed for students that no one

could possibly omit. But a very few specialized in philosophy. And among the few was one called *David.*

Who, then, was this man David and what did he accomplish with his philosophical mind and knowledge?

Let us now look into that.

David was descended from a family distinguished for its culture and intelligence. He was a nephew of Moses of Khoren, whose brother, Mampré, was also one of the honored intellectuals of the time.

David was one of the "Juniors," so-called, but with the keenness of his mind as good as any of the "Seniors," some of whom we have discussed in these short essays. The turn of the Armenian mind is not philosophical, as I stated before; it is mystical, romantic, poetical, and above all, practical. You find Armenians in the past, and in the present, who represent every branch of art—men, and women too, who have been, or are, builders, sculptors, painters, musicians, poets, writers, inventors, fine artisans of one kind or another—but you rarely meet a "philosopher" in the fullest sense of the term.

But here we have a David in the fifth century who was a *philosopher.* His mind had that turn, and he was trained by choice as a "philosopher" who digs into the essence of meaning of every phenomenon of life. He loved to deal with arguments. Debates with other men of his trade were his delight. Indeed, he had won the title of "The Unbeatable" because of his victory in public debates in which he had engaged. His fame spread all over the centers which represented the most advanced stage of Greek culture. He was held in high esteem in Constantinople. Indeed, he was favored by the emperor of the time, Marcianus, in whose court a debate was held between David and Greek philosophers who tried, but failed, to match his wit and wisdom.

But the tragedy is that when the brilliant students such as David returned home they were deeply disappointed with the prevailing political and social conditions of their native country. One basic cause of disappointment was the absence of their Masters. They had died, and nobody had been adequate to fill their place of leadership. I have already briefly covered the political history of this period. David found himself in the throes of a bitter struggle against the Persians for the preservation of the Christian faith and freedom. As others before him—Moses of Khoren, his uncle, for instance—he found no opportunity for the exercise of his wisdom and philosophy in the midst of endless strife within and without the country. He therefore decided to retire to a monastery where

he spent a miserable life brooding over his helplessness and uselessness, eventually dying and being buried a forgotten man.

We can easily appreciate the state of mind in which we find David after his return to Armenia. He was sent abroad for a *definite purpose.* He had studied hard in Athens and Constantinople for at least seven years. His enthusiasm as a student was sustained by the hope that when he returned home he would fill a position of responsibility as a leader in the great plan of intellectual and spiritual awakening which had been started by his beloved Masters. He had distinguished himself in every test of the knowledge he had acquired, and of the brilliance of his mind. And then . . . to find that nobody cared what he was, who he was . . in his own country! Is this an unusual experience? Alas, it is an experience that too many people have had, and others will have.

There is an irony in the cry that a need is not being met! Much of the failure in our national affairs has been due, as it is even now, to our deliberate oversight of sources of strength *we have.* Why so? Politics, jealousies, blindness, pettiness! And history never changes human nature. It is the same today as it was a thousand years ago, and as it will be ten thousand years from now.

David was trained for a *definite purpose,* but he was wasted. He is an illustration of what may, and does, happen in our own day. Make good use of the training of such men as we have! That is the secret of making progress. And do it without bias or prejudice for or against anybody. Ability and training should be decisive in the choice of men we need for definite tasks in our national life.

Poor David! He could do so much, and he did so little, because they gave him hardly any opportunity to do something of enduring value.

* * *

Like Eznik, he wrote an apologetic dissertation, or call it a "book" if you wish, in defense of the meaning of the Cross in Christian doctrine and theology, at the request of the Catholicos of the time, Gute, to whom I had occasion to refer in a previous essay.

"Heresies" of all kinds were rampant then as indeed they are now under a different guise. But what roused the ire of Catholicos Gute and drove him to make this emergency request of David were heresies about certain Christian tenets. The "heretics" claimed that the Cross had no spiritual meaning and was just a "piece of wood"; that Mary had not given birth to Jesus as a virgin, and a set of similar denials which nowadays are the stock arguments of atheists and skeptics. The leaders of these heresies were three men from a

village called Oshin. But that is of no particular importance for us here. David was pleased that he could work on an assignment and on the completion of his book the Catholicos himself was also pleased. But what is the sense of working a hundred-horse power engine when the work can easily be done with one-horse power? The analogy fits David and his labor.

The other book he produced was similar to the first. Again it was meant to be for the refutation of another heresy propagated by a Greek philosopher called Pyron, who questioned everything and believed nothing.

The second book by David was called "Book of Definitions." This book draws upon his philosophical knowledge and reasoning. It is not so easy to understand, and few would relish the reading of a book of abstractions and involved thinking about a subject of no present-day value. But it is a philosophical treatise intended to silence an "agnostic."

David could write in Greek as well as in Armenian. Because there is a very old text of this book in Greek also, some have concluded that he wrote originally in Greek, which later was translated. But he wrote in Armenian with a master hand also. This, however, is a technical point that belongs to scholars to settle.

Light drives away darkness. But does it always do so? Darkness hates light, and it snuffs out sometimes. That very thing happened time and again in our history. And the Golden Age was not an exception to it. David is an illustration as in a sense was his uncle, Moses. But the nature of light is that whether the darkness rejects it or not *it must lighten*. Our great men, like David, did that! So we owe them all honor and gratitude.

PART I
THE ENIGMA OF NATIONAL SURVIVAL

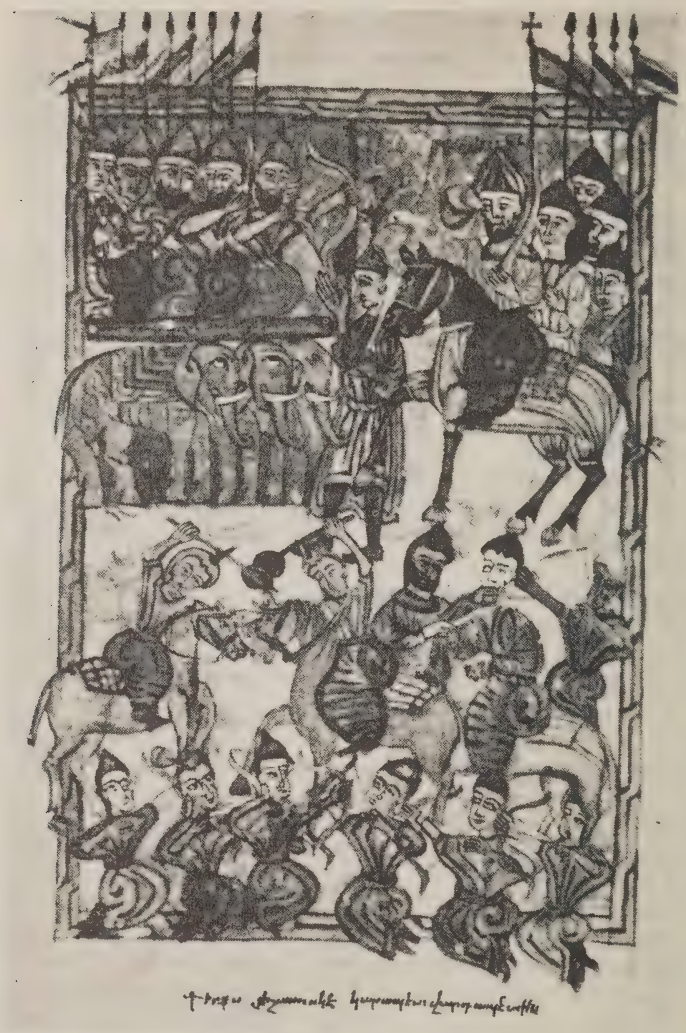
THERE ARE certain dates in the history of a nation that stand out for the light they shed over such questions as: What were the sources of strength of that nation? What were the forces responsible for the shaping of that nation's destiny? Why does a nation survive crises, and another goes down ingloriously? How can you diagnose the moral and spiritual health of a nation? How can you define the term "national character"? And other questions of a similar nature.

There are such dates in the history of the Armenian nation. Many years ago I published an article attempting an answer to a question posed to me: Which are the ten most significant dates in Armenian history? Now, I want to ask the question: Is it possible to pin-point just *one* date for its comprehensive and decisive significance over and above all others in Armenian history?

In the light of my own knowledge of Armenian history, I will not hesitate to suggest 451 as a date of overwhelming significance.

Every Armenian will readily recognize that date. It is the date of a "glorious" defeat of Armenians in a brave though desperate battle against the mighty armies (outnumbering them ten to one) of the Sassanian King of Persia. The battle was waged in defense of freedom of conscience and of the Christian faith and "way of life" Armenians had adopted only a century and a half previously. I cannot take time, nor crowd the space limited to this article, with the historic events of the time which led up to the Battle of 451. The reader, if interested in details, may easily consult one or more histories of Armenia and get a clear picture of the conflicts between Armenians and Persians and their opposing senses of cultural and religious values. But I must share with my readers some thinking I have done about the unique significance of this single date in Armenian history.

In that date I find the epitome of the very character and spirit of the Armenian people that made the "miracle" of national sur-



This picture taken from a 16th century MS of Elisaeus' History illustrating the bloody battle of Avarair in 451 A.D. The original MS. is found in the National Library of Erivan.

vival possible. For Armenian history is a record of something peculiar to the Armenian character enabling him to survive in circumstances that normally would doom another nation without that character.

To think that there was a Tigran 2000 years ago, and there still are Tigrans today, and Arams, and Vahes, and Haigs, and Yervants, and Ardashes, is an amazing fact of this nation's history—and all of them of the same ancestry, of the same language, of the same character, of the same experiences and aspirations. Compare! Only by comparison will you be able to appreciate the unusual significance of such a fact.

Well, how did it happen? Because of what Armenians in the year 451 determined to be and to do. That epic of an event, a contemporary writer with a poetic turn of mind, one Elisaeus (Yeghishe), another of the so-called Junior Translators, has pictured in colorful detail in a volume entitled "The History of Vartan and His Companions." I have persisted in calling that little volume the "testament" of Armenians. The New Testament is the history of Christianity—its rise and spread. This one by Elisaeus is, in a special sense, the history of "Armenian" Christianity—its genius and enduring quality.

* * *

More than any of the Armenian historians, Elisaeus supplies the answer to the question of how did the Armenian nation ever survive?

When we analyze the ideas and the spirit of this little volume of history we find the basic reasons for the survival of the Armenian nation. Of those reasons I will bring to the notice of my readers a few.

First, ingrained in Armenians was the faith in and love for the principle of the inviolability of freedom of conscience. This meant choosing the road leading to martyrdom. And yet the evidence of history is that martyrdom, far from destroying a nation, exalts and immortalizes it.

The Covenant to abide steadfastly by the principle of freedom of conscience was activated by the Armenians in the middle of the fifth century under the leadership of Vartan, since distinguished with such exalted titles as "Saint" and "Bravest of the Brave."

You will remember the following familiar lines from Elisaeus: "From this belief no one can move us; neither angels, nor men, nor sword, nor water, nor any violent tortures than can be conceived or devised. All our goods and possessions are before thee

(referring to the King of Persians); dispose of them as thou wishest. And if thou wilt only grant us freedom to our belief, we will, here below, choose no other lord in thy place, and in heaven, we will honor no other God than Jesus Christ, for, there is no other God save Him. But shouldst thou require something beyond this witness, behold our decision: our bodies are in thy hands; do with them according to thy pleasure; tortures are within thy power to inflict upon us; and patience, within ours; thou hast the sword, and we the neck to submit to it. We are not better than our forefathers who, for the sake of their faith, resigned their goods, possessions, and life itself. Were we immortal, it would behoove us to die for the love of Christ; for, he himself was immortal and he so loved us that he submitted to death so that by his death we might be saved from eternal death. Since he did not regard his immortality, we also, who are mortal, will cheerfully die for him that he may make us participants of his immortality. We die as mortals so that we may, through our death, be classed with those who are immortal.

"Do thou, then, enquire of us no further concerning these things; for our belief has its origin not in men. We are not to be treated as children; we are indissolubly bound to God, from whom nothing can detach us neither now nor hereafter, nor forever and ever."

To the best of my knowledge this is the first time that a Christian nation makes a declaration of the principle of the inviolability of freedom of conscience and thought. Even in the Apostolic Age we fail to find such an open declaration, except casual expressions of self-dedication to high ideals by individuals. The Apostle Paul expressed his personal feelings when he wrote: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulations, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor death, nor life, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

But here is an entire nation (not an individual) that speaks: "No one can separate us from this faith . . ." implying that they were willing to stake their entire national life upon that one principle. In a heroic spirit they decided that they would hold whatever loss they might sustain a gain, if so doing they could maintain the inviolability of their conscience. What they really did was to weigh the life of the nation for the next thousand years and act accordingly. They were thoroughly convinced that the Covenant to which they had dedicated their lives would insure the life of the

nation for a thousand years to come, and nothing else would.

That Covenant or, in current terms, Charter, was drawn up not for Vartan's men alone. It was drawn up for generations to come. And Armenians of this generation survive, after fifteen centuries, because that Charter has been the corner stone of the structure of the national life of Armenians.

And this Charter has no precedent in all history save in the New Testament in a specified sense.

In 451, while Armenians were sealing this Covenant or Charter with their own blood, way up north, in a suburb of Constantinople, ecclesiastical dignitaries, sitting in council together, were busy formulating another type of "covenant" or "symbol" which, contrary to the spirit and intent of the Armenian Covenant, would shackle the freedom of Christian thought and conscience.

How many, even among historians, know what transpired in Armenia in the fifth century and what its far-reaching implications were for the ultimate world-wide emancipation of the mind and conscience from its fetters?

In England, the Charter of Freedom, known as the Magna Carta, was wrested from the hands of King John in 1215 . . . only 765 years after Vartan and his companions had subscribed to a Charter of Freedom.

As American citizens we are proud of a glorious document called the "Declaration of Independence." But do all Armenians know, even if no American knows, that the basic ideas incorporated in that document were conceived and clearly declared by Armenians about thirteen centuries before? This is no fancy; it is a historical fact.

Armenians proved themselves heroes not because they fought and died bravely on a battlefield. They were heroes because they had the character to uphold a sacred principle at any cost. A hero is one who lives for a cause or idea heroically and if need be dies for it. Death is only incidental in the life of a hero. Christ died heroically because he lived heroically. Armenians have lived heroically because they were willing to die for a principle, as they did. Why did they fight on the field of Avarair in 451? Why were they persecuted, and hounded generation after generation, and scattered like chaff before the wind to distant corners of the world? Why have they been martyred, orphaned, widowed? And why are they still living? To all these questions Elisaeus gives the answer: "We are indissolubly bound to God from whom nothing can detach us, neither now nor hereafter nor for ever and ever." This has been as binding a Covenant as eternity itself.

To the searching question of how this nation ever survived for fifteen centuries, there is still another answer and it is this: The Charter of Freedom of Conscience drawn up by Vartan and his heroic band has been faithfully adhered to by succeeding generations down to our own days. No one has dared to tamper with it or to trample over it. Its word and spirit have endured through all times.

In support of his argument let me quote another paragraph from Elisaeus: "Although the King (of Persia) perpetrated on them every form of violence; imprisoned and tortured many of them; or, put them to death; he became weary and bitter because, in spite of every cruel measure he took against them, he failed to diminish their number (i.e., freedom-loving heroes). When he sealed the doors of their churches, they made a church of every dwelling, in which they held their services of worship. Each person became an ardent witness to the Word and rendered his spirit a temple of God even worthier than one built of mortar and stone. The swords of their slayers grew blunt by use, yet necks did not shrink from yielding to their edge. They pillaged all their possessions and yet the booty was never exhausted. The King became infuriated seeing all this and the rage of their executioners had no bound. They endured every blow and every form of torture with joy, and their resignation to plunder and ravage of their land was perfect!"

This was in part the report of the High priest to the Governor of the land (Marzpan) who had totally despaired of the success of enforcing Mazdaism (the Sassanian religion of worship of fire) upon Christian Armenia.

This has been the immutable pattern of the life of Armenians all through the ensuing centuries. No matter how deep and how dark was the valley of suffering and death through which they had to walk, they stood firmly by the Covenant of 451.

And as a consequence of their unswerving devotion to this Covenant Armenians stopped the tide of Islam that would have engulfed all of Europe and the Mediterranean world, east and west. Charles Martel, with his victory at Tours in 732, plugged the dykes in westen Europe against the floods of "the religion of fire and sword." That is a well known fact in every history book students read from their earliest youth. But who ever has heard that three centuries earlier the Armenians erected, with heroic sacrifice, a rampart in the Middle East to withstand the onslaught of Islam in a later age?

If the Armenians had yielded to the Persian pressure and had accepted their religion in 451, they would, in no time, been as-

similated by the Persians, and, two centuries later would have been claimed by Islam when Persia was overrun by the fanatical followers of the Prophet of Arabia. But that danger was forestalled because of the heroism of Armenians who held their ground, firm in their commitment to the Covenant of Freedom of Conscience. In the light of historical facts, Vartan was the Charles Martel of the East, although while the one wears a halo of glory in the pages of history, the other remains as one among the "lost tribe" of heroes.

History proves that sometimes, in the Providence of God, big tasks are assigned not only to big nations but also to little nations. Read Elisaeus and you will find a brilliant illustration of that fact. He gives the most definitive answer, as I have tried to show, to the question "Why Armenians survived."

* * *

There is, however, still another question which must be answered; and that is, "Why did they survive?" Rhetorically, though truthfully, I would suggest that they survived to demonstrate to the entire civilized world that the secret of national survival lies in a faithful alliance with spiritual forces, whatever they may be, ideas, ideals, eternal truths, and a divine pattern of life; also, in the choice of principles of morality and integrity over against brute force; or, in a declaration that God is above Matter.

Armenians can proclaim to the world in which we live at present: "Do you see how we survived? You too can survive if you surrender to and trust in God; the spiritual forces are still guiding and deciding human destiny."

PART II
THE POET HISTORIAN

IN THE previous chapter I outlined the subject matter covered by the historian of the wars Armenians waged against the Persians culminating in the Battle of Avarair in 451. The exact title of the book that Elisaeus himself gives to it is "History of Vartan and the Armenian War."

But who was this man?

Unfortunately, we know very litle about him. He did not have a biographer such as St. Mesrop had. Neither did he himself leave a record of the highlights of his life. Shall we say he was too big a man to be concerned with himself? Indeed, he forgot himself, absorbed in the work to which he had dedicated himself; and in the fateful events of which he was a part. He reasoned in his own mind, as great men of all times do, that what he was called to do was more important than what he himself was. The distinctive outward garb of greatness is invariably modesty. No braggart has ever attained greatness; and no great man has ever been a braggart.

The poetic historian of the epic of Vartan and his heroic band, Elisaeus, is silent about himself. He was a "vartabed" but then practically all the literary men of the Golden Age were clerics. Some have attempted to identify him with one by the name of Amatouny among the bishops who met at Ardashad, the capital of Armenia, to discuss the critical situation the nation was facing, the threat of Zoroastrianism to Christianity, and to decide the stand they should take and the answer to the letter of the King of Persia they should formulate. It may be so, or it may not be. That particular detail is not of much concern to us. Had he been a "Bishop" in rank he could not have been a better man than he was as a clergyman of the lower rank, a mere "Vartabed," in so far as his intellectual and spiritual qualities were concerned.

We know that he was Vartan's private secretary. Here is a point of similarity between Mesrop and Elisaeus. Both were attached to political officialdom for part of their lives. Mesrop was, before

he entered the service of the church, a secretary to royalty. Elisaeus occupied a similar position with the political and military head of the nation, General Vartan, during that period. That is a very important detail of his life to take note of, because it helps us to read his history with confidence. Who could have known more of the events which transpired during the years of national crisis, and of the men involved than one, like Elisaeus who had such intimate ties with Vartan? Unless the intimation of his close association with Vartan is unfounded, how can one entertain suspicions of the truthfulness of his history that has come down to us through a span of centuries, credited to his authorship? This is how a layman would argue in his own mind. And yet some critics have shed doubt about the authorship of the history with which the name of Elisaeus is associated. I will not go into these critical views although they are not all of the sort to be dismissed light-heartedly. A good number of serious scholars have taken up the question and some of them have attempted to debunk the historical value of the book, and have been unwilling to credit it with merit beyond that of a glamorized epic poetry.

But I am not myself a critic and I have no ground to side with the critics, who, after all, are in the minority. I stand firmly with the majority who believe in the honesty and truthfulness of Elisaeus, and admire him and are inspired as much by his ardent patriotism as by his artful pictures of men and of events to which he was an eye witness. His record is a first-hand record. He described what he actually saw. He, too, fought in battles, for he was in Vartan's army. He definitely states in his history that he was an eye witness of what he writes. He says: "I am not carried away by opinions or hearsay, for, I have been right there in the midst of happenings, and I heard and saw . . . (And in reference to an incident he says): I do not cease to tell the truth." Such statements are interspersed in different chapters of his history.

There is the question of whether or not he entered the ministry and took his vows as a celibate priest before or after the Battle of Avarair. There are some critics who argue the case in favor of a later date and others of an earlier date.

But above all critical arguments here stands the man we know as the author of one of the classics of Armenian Literature of the Golden Age.

* * *

Elisaeus also was one of the so-called "Junior Translators" and, like the rest of them, he was sent abroad for his education. Some of his contemporaries had been his fellow students in Alexandria,

Egypt, such as Moses of Khoren, his brother Mampré and David the Philosopher, whom we have already introduced in previous chapters.

But Elisaeus, like most of his fellow students, found, on his return home, a desperate situation of political confusion, demoralization, strife within and grave danger from without. We have already reviewed that situation. Much of the intellectual and spiritual resources available during this period were wasted because of the state of affairs within the nation.

In general terms, the political life of the nation took a downward course from 387 A.D. on, when Byzantium and Persia agreed by treaty to divide Armenia into two zones. This meant, as we saw, placing the entire country under the control of two foreign powers. A fourth of the land thus passed on to the Eastern Empire and the balance to the Persian Empire. The Greeks lost no time in stripping their portion of the land of all representation of the rule of the royal house of Armenia. They replaced Armenian culture, even language, with Greek. In course of time the Armenian population of that portion of the land was Hellenized. Descendants of these Hellenized Armenians, known popularly as "Hai Horom," meaninig "Armenian Romans," existed until recent times.

A Christian Armenia was like a thorn in the side of the two empires which were bitter rivals. No wonder that Bishop Sebeos, a seventh century Armenian historian, refers to a letter the Emperor of the time at Constantinople is supposed to have written to the Persian "King of Kings" urging him to agree to a division of Armenia between them as a condition for enduring peace, saying: "They (Armenians) are an unruly and disobedient people and a disturbing element in the maintenance of peaceful relations between us. Hence, let me deport those under my sovereignty to Thrace, and you do the same with yours. If they die or are killed on the way, what of it? they are our enemies who will die or be killed; for, if they are left in their native-land, they will never let us have peace." Whether the letter is authentic or not is of no importance, the fact is that the policy pursued both by the Greeks and the Persians is reflected in the spirit of that letter.

The Persians bided their time before they took over. In 428 the last king of Armenia was deposed and with the termination of the rule of the Arsacid Dynasty terminated also the independence of Armenia, and it became a satrapy of the Persian Empire. Loss of independence meant internal disintegration, despair and a serious blow to Armenia's cultural heritage. We have already gone over that ground and have a fair idea of what the situation was.

Well, the second generation of students found themselves, on their return home from abroad, in a disheartening situation. And so also did Elisaeus.

During the Armenian rebellion and the ensuing wars against the Persians, Elisaeus, like many other patriotic Armenian youth, enlisted as a soldier. After the defeat of the Armenians at the battle of Avarair, the confusion in the domestic affairs of the country continued. So, like others, to some of whom we have already referred, he decided to isolate himself from society and become an ascetic. He withdrew into the mountains of the province of Mogk and made a cave his home and there he presumably concentrated on prayers and the writing of the history of the heroic struggle of Armenians against the Persians for their faith and their Christian institutions. A discouraged man, he wanted to live with his memories and to devote himself to the task of passing a record of these memories to future generations to inspire them with the same love and ideals that had made martyrs of so many of their fellow-countrymen. When he had completed his task he wanted to die in oblivion and be buried in the cave which had housed him during his lifetime. But he was discovered, as the tradition has it, by shepherds. He considered this a misfortune. So as not to be molested any further, he left his cave and moved to the province of Rushtoonik to continue his ascetic life, where he died shortly afterwards.

* * *

Besides his major work, the "History," he produced a few other works of minor importance, some of which have survived and others of which are lost.

Of the writings that survive one is a treatise on "Asceticism," another is "An Exposition of the Books of Joshua and the Judges," and still another is "An Expository Treatise on Creation." With none of these am I personally acquainted, so that I can make no comment on them.

But with his "History" Elisaeus will live forever. If I were asked, "What one single book from among the Armenian classics would you recommend for every Armenian to have and to read?", I would answer, "Elisaeus," for the author's name is used as a substitute for the title of the book he wrote. Have a copy of it in classical Armenian just to look at, to feel it, if you cannot read and understand it. If you can read modern Armenian, get hold of a translation of it in modern Armenian. There are six different translations of it in modern Armenian. There is the Zovickian and Boyajian translation of the entire book both in English and modern

Armenian published in this country, in 1952. And another one by Prof. Y. Der Minassian of Erivan University published in Cairo, Egypt, in 1950, in unrevised spelling that makes it easy to read for Armenians outside of Armenia.

It was translated into English for the first time in 1830 by G. F. Neuman, although many portions of the book are omitted. The Italian translation by an Italian priest called Giuseppe Capelletti appeared in Venice in 1840. There have been two different French translations; one, by an Armenian called Krikor Vartabed Kabaradjian, in 1841; and the second translation by Victor Langlois in 1868. There are two different Russian translations: one published in Tiflis in 1853, by B. Shanshiev; and the other by Emile Dillon, published in Kharkow in 1884. Unfortunately, these translations are out of print and it is not easy to find any of them, except perhaps in large libraries.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Mechitarists of Venice who have published a continuous set of editions of the original text of Elisaeus through the years and made them available to the public at a nominal price. The first edition of Elisaeus was published in Constantinople in 1764 by Abraham Vartabed of Etchmiadzin, which later was reprinted in St. Petersburg (now named Leningrad) by Bishop Hovsep Arghoutiantz.

THE "LAST ROSE" OF THE GOLDEN AGE

AND IT, TOO, faded out ingloriously and the Golden Age came virtually to its close!

And this "rose" in the intellectual garden—in which we have been taking a walk for some time with mixed feelings of elation, admiration, and grief and disappointment—was a man by the name of Lazare of Pharbe (Parbetsi, in Armenian). Fortunately we know relatively something more about his life (for a particular reason I will presently indicate) than about most of the intellectuals who flourished in the same age, and the most prominent representatives of whom I have introduced in these essays.

Lazare was a historian of marked distinction. His history covers a period of one century and a little over, to be exact, from 387, when Armenia was divided between the two Empires of the West and the East, or, the Greeks (the Eastern Romans) and the Persians, to the end of the Satrapy of Vahan Mamikonian, in 505 A.D. Another way of describing the period he covered would be to say: the period between the beginning and the end of the Golden Age. And as Sts. Sahag and Mesrop marked the beginning of the Golden Age, so Lazare, who recounts the story of it, marked the end. Hence the borrowed term of the "last rose" of the Golden Age!

* * *

I have in previous essays cursorily reviewed the political, social, and spiritual conditions in the period that Lazare covers, in reasonable detail, in his "History." Here in this portion of the story of the Golden Age I want to make the *author himself* the subject of primary study, and the "History" he wrote the secondary subject.

Who, then, was Lazare of Pharbe?

He was the youngest and the last of the "Junior Translators," so-called. During the most critical period of Armenian history, he was but a child, hardly aware of the political changes taking place in the country, and the sufferings they entailed. He was a little boy of ten when the fateful Battle of Avarair in 451 was waged by Vartan and his heroic army against the Persian hordes. No doubt

he, too, as a child experienced much of the suffering in one way or another that the entire adult population of the land did during those years. He grew into manhood in a period during which the land groaned under the heels of Persian domination. And when he was capable of evaluating the meaning of the events in the midst of which he found himself, an intense desire took shape in his soul to fit himself intellectually and spiritually to join the forces which were being lined up for the restoration of freedom to the people, and the Christian religion and culture which they had lost and forgotten.

So he devoted himself to learning, intending eventually to enter the ministry of the Church. He grew up with the nephew of Vartan, Vahan Mamikonian, who bravely carried on the struggle his uncle had begun, until he succeeded in convincing the Persians that they could never force the Armenians to give up their Christian faith. Lazare received his preliminary education at the court of Prince Ashoosha of Georgia whose wife was his aunt. He had, later, for his teacher a saintly scholar whose name was Alan, the son of a feudal lord, who had left home and all the allurements of wealth and prestige, and was ordained as a priest. Lazare speaks of his indebtedness to Alan for his inspiration to him in the development of his character and ideals, and for the learning he acquired. The usual educational pattern was followed by Lazare. He went to Athens to perfect his knowledge of Greek. It was no more strange then than it is now that the more a man with a brilliant mind learns, the more he wants to learn. That "there never is an end to learning" was as true an axiom in the fifth century as it is now. On his return he went through the same agony of disappointments as so many others before him had. I have already sketched the situation in the land during the second half of the fifth century. It was the kind that would break the spirit of the bravest. So, Lazare, completely demoralized, withdrew into the wilderness, and lived in a cave as an ascetic.

But political fortunes changed, and, as we saw before, Vahan succeeded in forcing his enemies to make peace. A treaty was drawn up in 484 by which freedom of conscience was restored to the Armenians. Armenia still remained a vassal state to Persia, but some degree of national development and progress was assured and the Persian governor (or, "Satrap") was replaced by an Armenian immediately on the signing of the treaty. And who could be other than Vahan himself?

* * *

As soon as Vahan came to power, he sought out men trained

and capable for filling responsible positions and duties. He therefore appointed his boyhood friend, Lazare, to head a very large and important institution, the church and convent of Valarshabat. And with that appointment Lazare's trials and tribulations began. Why? Because of the perversity of human nature.

Valarshabat became a great educational center largely due to the progressive leadership of Lazare. But evidently in a decadent atmosphere he could not go very far without arousing opposition to his efforts. The tools with which the inferior fight against the superior are jealousy, suspicion, and slander. So the petty clergy used every imaginable device to obstruct his plans and accused him of a long array of failures. They attacked his character, his morals, his beliefs, even his loyalty to friend and country. Satan single-handedly can, as the saying goes, be more destructive than a legion of angels can be constructive. If the heart is evil, it will never rest until it has carried its deadly venom to the very ends of the world. In view of the potential perversity of human nature, there is nothing new about the display of such vile cruelty towards a good and innocent man.

In his desperation Lazare appealed to the Catholicos to interfere and help him. But the Catholicos, for some inexplicable reason, did not respond to his appeal. Was it because he had personal grievances against Lazare? Or, perhaps because he was himself jealous of Lazare's distinction and of the esteem in which his patron, the Governor, held him? Who knows? The aloofness of the Catholicos encouraged his enemies to carry the violence of their attacks to such a point that Lazare was forced to leave Valarshabat and find refuge in Amit (more familiarly known as Tigranagert). From his retreat there he wrote a long letter to his patron, Vahan, defending himself against the false accusations of his enemies. In this letter (which consists of about 3500 words by actual count) he takes up every single accusation against him and proves his innocence. His defense was so convincing and eloquent that it could not fail to impress Vahan, who sent for him. Lazare presented himself to Vahan and he was reassured of his continued confidence and esteem.

One of the grave charges Lazare took pains to refute vigorously and at length concerned his membership in a sect which was supposed to engage in immoral practices. His enemies had mercilessly heaped upon their victim charges of every abominable act or thought they could invent in their evil hearts. Of all these charges Lazare cleared himself at the cost of much mental and physical agony.

However, some good may come out of evil. For, were it not for this letter that Lazare was forced to write, we would have known much less about him than we do. Letters are rich sources for biographical information about a person's circumstances of life and character. In this letter we see reflected the stature of a truly great man.

* * *

And now just a word or two about Lazare's "History."

He undertook to write the History of a period in which only a few generations had lived, at the request of his patron, Vahan. I have already stated at what point he started and ended his history. He really took up the histories of Agathangelos and Faustus Byzant at the point they had left off and carried it on to the termination of Vahan's governorship over Armenia.

He divided his history into three "sections" ("Tervak," in Armenian).

In the second "section" he goes over the same ground that Elisaeus had covered. It is more likely than not that Lazare was acquainted with Elisaeus' History. There are similarities as well as differences between the two accounts. This we can say with assurance: Whereas Elisaeus was an *eye witness* of the events he had recorded, Lazare was not. But the style of each writer is as distinct as the personalities of the two authors are different. Elisaeus was, as we have already seen, a poet and he treated the history as a subject of poetry. Lazare's style is clear and matter-of-fact. He is objective in his narration. His main concern is not the effect of his story upon the reader but its truth. When two historians record the same and identical event, similarities of color and expression may become unavoidable. But that does not necessarily imply that one copies the other. Similar reactions often are by necessity expressed in similar words. This is how we should account for the similarities of the two histories. It is fairer to say that one complements the other and makes the picture of a very significant period in Armenian history clearer.

* * *

This will close the story of the Golden Age which I tried to outline as concisely as I could. I tried to be selective in my presentation of the personalities who played a significant role in the intellectual and spiritual development of the Armenian people within that age. My outline did not call for comprehensiveness, but it did for explicitness. I have left out more figures than I have

considered; but those I have considered contributed more amply and vitally to the creation of the Golden Age than those I have left out. In other words, of the two classes, a few were indispensable; many were dispensable. And I have considered only those who, by common consent, were indispensable. A fair knowledge of these figures will signify knowledge of the primary sources of tremendous intellectual and spiritual power which, jointly, brought about the Golden Age of the fifth century.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ARMENIAN HISTORY
and the PRINCIPAL FIGURES OF THE PERIOD

RULERS OVER PERSIA		RULERS OVER ARMENIA		CATHOLICI	NOTABLE EVENTS
			In the succession of Arsacids		
1	Shapour II (310-379)				
2	Ardashir (379-384)	19	Arshag (378-386) Sons of Bab		
3	Shapour III (384-389)	19	Valarshag (378-386) co-kings		Valarshag ruled 2 years over the Greek portion of Armenia, then abdicated.
4	Vram IV (388-399)	20	Khozrov II (386-392)		
		21	Vramshapouh (392-414)	Sahag Partev (387-428)	
5	Yeztegert I (399-420)	20	Khosrov III (414-420) succeeds self	also: (322-439)	"Invention" of Armenian alphabet, 414.
6	Vram V (420-438)	22	Ardashes IV (423-428)		428, end of Arsacid Dynasty and independence. Division of land between Persians and Greeks.
			Persian Domination—Marzpans		
7	Yeztegert II (438-457)	a	Vehmihrshapouh (430-438)	Hovsep I (440-452)	Battle of Avarair, 451.
		b	Vasag Sewny (438-451)		
		c	Atromist (451-465)	Melite I (452-456)	
		d	Aternishnasp (465-481)	Moses I (456-461)	
		e	Sahag Pakratouni (481-482)	Gute (461-478)	
		f	Shapouh Mihranian (483-484)	Hovhan Mantagouni (478-490)	Treaty of Newarsag, 484, restoring peace between Persians and Armenians; freedom of conscience assured.
		g	Antekan (484-485)		
		h	Vahan Mamigonian (485-505)	Babken I (490-515)	
		i	Vart (505-509)		

	SENIORS		JUNIORS	
THE TRANSLATORS	Catholicos Hovsep	Moushe	Moses of Khoren	Cathol. Hovhan Mantagouni
	Levont	Hovsep of Paghn	Mampre the Philosopher	Elisaeus
	Eznik	Hovhan	David the Orator and Philosopher	Lazar of Pharbe and others
	Goriun	Enoch and others	Catholicos Gute	

NOTES—Observe the comparative duration of the rule of political heads of states and the term of years during which successive Catholici were in office. The names appearing in the chart have been mentioned or commented upon at some length in the foregoing Chapters on the Golden Age. The reader can readily find references to names in these essays. Otherwise he is referred to the bibliography given on the next page.

CONCLUSION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

My object was to interest the English-speaking Armenians in the most significant period of Armenian History from different angles, which I have indicated in the foregoing pages. The key to the understanding of Armenian History since 303, when Christianity was proclaimed as the official state religion, lies in the knowledge and appreciation of the events which evolved in the crucial period of just this one century.

If I have stimulated the mind of my readers to know more about the Armenian people, I will feel myself fully rewarded.

One who is eager to learn more will know just where to look for sources of the knowledge he seeks. But to facilitate the search for more knowledge, I will suggest an extremely short list of books of reference:

A. Have at hand a good general history covering ancient times.

B. For Histories on Armenia:

1. Jacques de Morgan's Histoire du Peuple Arménien (Paris, 1919). This volume is translated both into English and into Armenian, and can be secured from Hairenik Bookstore, 212 Stuart St., Boston 16, Mass.

2. History of Armenia by Vahan M. Kurkjian (New York, 1959). Available at the AGBU offices at 250 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N. Y.

3. Armenia and the Armenians by Kevork Aslan, translated from the French text by Pierre Crabites (New York, 1920, publ. The MacMillan Co.; a new ed. 1928).

4. Histoire de l'Arménie by René Grousset (Paris, 1947).

5. History of Armenia from 2247 B.C. to 1780 A.D. by Father Michael Chamchian. This is an abbreviated edition in English, translated from the original two volume edition in Armenian, translated by J. Advall (Calcutta, 1827). This is an uncritical history but its advantage lies in the fact that it relies on traditional sources written by Armenian classical historians. One who is unfamiliar with the original sources in Armenian can have some idea of them by consulting Chamchian.

6. F. Neve's L'Armenie Chretienne (Louvain, 1886).

7. The following two volumes of translations of original sources are very valuable for those who can read French: Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Armenie par Victor Langlois (Paris, Tome premier, 1880; tome deuxieme, 1869). Also, M. F. Brosset's Collection d'Historiens Armeniens, Tome I et II (St. Petersbourg, 1874-76).

8. The Armenian Church by Theodore Edward Dowling (Publ. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1910).

9. The Church of Armenia, the History, Doctrine, Rule, and Discipline, Liturgy, Literature, by Archbishop Malachia Ormanian, translated by G. Marcar Gregory, V.D. (London, 1912); a second edition by the original publishers in London, 1954; and an "American edition" of the same by Haig H. Toumayan, Brookline, Mass., 1954, which may be available at the offices of Nor Ashkar, 37 West 20th St., New York 11, N. Y.

10. I recommend the series of articles on "The Great Pillars of the Armenian Church" by Dickran H. Boyajian, which appeared serially in the Armenian Mirror Spectator, and which have been collected in a volume under the same title.

The perusal of these volumes will provide ample knowledge of the Armenian people in all their struggles and achievements and explain fully the secret of the survival of a little nation, which hardly ever numbered more than four million, through a long span of more or less twenty-five centuries.

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REV. A. A. BEDIKIAN, THE AUTHOR

The Reverend Antranig Arakel Bedikian is Pastor Emeritus of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York City and resides in Leonia, New Jersey, with his wife, Marie Caroline Bashian Bedikian. This limited space is hardly adequate to acknowledge his many achievements and profound influence. Although the Reverend Bedikian needs no introduction, it is appropriate to cite a few salient biographical facts concerning his life.

The Reverend Bedikian, a man of letters, received his A.B. degree in 1907, from Robert College and then acquired his Ph.B., M.A., and B.D. degrees from Chicago University during the years 1912-1915. On June 17 of the same year he was ordained and served as a minister in the Protestant Armenian community for thirty-eight years when in 1953, he retired from the active ministry.

The Reverend Bedikian was and continues steadfastly loyal and devoted to his Armenian heritage and background. Through his many deeds and scholarly written works his ministry projected well beyond his Protestant congregations to include the Apostolic community as attested to by special written commendations bestowed upon the Reverend Bedikian by Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Archbishop Karekin Sarkissian, and Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan as cited in the Winter 1974-75 issue of "Outlook". In this same issue many other prominent Armenians also paid tribute for his more than half century of community service.

Perhaps the ethos of the Reverend Bedikian's contributions is justly summarized by Dr. G.H. Chopourian who stated, "May the torch of intellectual, literary, religious and humanitarian brightness you have lit light the path of Armenian youth in the generations to come."

THOMAS MORANIAN, Ph.D.